

# Why Chicken Deserves a Top Spot on Your Plate



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Chicken meat is a highly nutritious and the best protein food for all class of population which is packed with proteins, nine essential amino acids, many micronutrients like vitamins and minerals. Chicken is tasty, cost effective, readily available and there are hundreds of chicken recipes. Chicken is such a food which can be consumed by everyone, every day from an eight months old child to an eighty years old person.

Let's check the nutritional value of 100 gms. cooked chicken (Source Wikipedia & USDA)

Energy	219KCal	Cholesterol	88mg
Carbohydrate	0.00	Vit A	161IU
Fat	12.56gm	Vit E	0.27mg
Saturated Fat	3.5gm	Vit D	2IU
Monounsaturated Fat	4.93gm	Vit K	2.4µg
Polyunsaturated Fat	2.74gm	Thiamine (B1)	0.063mg
Protein	24.68gm	Riboflavin (B2)	0.168mg
Tryptophan	0.276gm	Niacin (B3)	8.49mg
Threonine	1.020gm	Pantothenic Acid (B5)	1.03mg
Isoleucine	1.233gm	Vit B6	0.4mg
Leucine	1.797gm	Folate	5µg
Lysine	2.011gm	Choline	65.9mg
Methionine	0.657gm	Vit B12	0.3µg
Cystine	0.329gm	Iron	1.26mg
Phenylalanine	0.959gm	Sodium	82mg
Tyrosine	0.796gm	Calcium	15mg
Valine	1.199gm	Phosphorus	182mg
Arginine	1.545gm	Magnesium	23mg
Histidine	0.726gm	Potassium	223mg
Alanine	1.436gm	Zinc	1.94mg
Aspartic Acid	2.200gm	Copper	0.066mg
Glutamic Acid	3.610gm	Manganese	0.02mg
Glycine	1.583gm	Selenium	23.9 µg
Proline	1.190gm	Fluoride	14.7µg
Serine	0.870gm	Water	59.4gm



Because of its nutritional richness, chicken is suitable for everyone, which I am going to discuss. There are some other non-nutritional benefits like:

- Chicken is tasty
- Chicken can be produced under any climate
- Chicken cooking is convenient
- Chicken is relatively cost effective
- Hundreds of chicken recipes exist
- Can be stored and consumed later

### General Nutritional Benefits Include

- High protein content; packed with 9 essential amino acids
- Chicken meat is good source of most vitamins and minerals
- Chicken has low calories, low fat and low cholesterol, hence suitable for all
- Chicken contains good quantity of necessary fatty acids
- Chicken is easily digestible

Chicken has special nutritional benefits for all ages in the family even under situation of need.

### Benefits of Chicken as Food for Infants

- Chicken contains many nutrients that babies need to thrive, including Vitamin B3, B6 & B12, Choline, Iron, Zinc and Selenium

- Together, these nutrients support antioxidant activities, fuel cell energy, create healthy blood and promote a strong sense of taste and smell
- Chicken is good for bone development in infants
- Helps muscle growth



- Improves circulatory system development
- Chicken boosts brain health in children
- It boosts Immunity; chicken has micronutrients like Zinc & Magnesium which help building immunity in baby and prevents infections and ailments
- As soon as a baby attains eight months age, boiled chicken may be given as puree with/ without mixing carrot

#### Benefits of Chicken for Young Adults

- Chicken helps bone development in young growing generation
- Helps development of muscles in young adults
- Chicken contains vitamins & minerals such as Vitamin B12, Choline, Zinc, Iron and long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids. Vitamin B12 and Choline work together to promote brain growth among young people



- Chicken helps the nervous system in normal functioning

- Choline in chicken provides several health advantages throughout our lives

#### Benefits of Chicken in Hard Working People and Sports persons

- Lean meat like chicken is a fantastic food for building muscles as it contains high amount of protein with almost all essential amino acids
- Chicken has tryptophan, an amino acid linked with increasing levels of exercise tolerance
- Vitamin B12 in chicken helps keep the body's nerve and blood cells healthy
- Chicken provides under-consumed vitamins and minerals, and can be centre of the plate for a heart-healthy, low-fat, low-cholesterol diet
- Eating chicken can help to build stronger muscles and promote healthier bones, decreasing the risk of injuries and diseases such as osteoporosis
- Chicken is rich in Creatine, an amino acid needed for string contraction in muscles. The body synthesizes it from other amino acids, but chicken provides it in a form ready to convert to phosphocreatine, to store in the muscles & used for body movements

#### Benefits of Chicken for Senior Citizens

- As we age, the nutritional needs of our body changes. Senior citizens are among the most vulnerable to malnutrition. Research says 71% of the elderly are either at risk or are already malnourished. Unfortunately, malnourishment among senior citizens is associated with higher mortality risk



- Apart from depleting protein and fat, the elderly might suffer from many dietary deficiencies, including Vitamin B3 (niacin), B9 (folate), B12, D & E, Mg, Ca, K, fiber and omega 3 fatty acid
- One food that can provide a wide range of nutritional needs to senior citizens, is chicken
- Chicken is a nutrient-dense food: contains 2 types of meat – dark (the meat from legs) and white (breast & wing meat). Both are rich in nutrition, but differ in nutritional value. Dark meat has higher fat and fiber content, as the muscles from hard working body parts. Chicken skin contains more carbohydrates and fats

- Chicken is a lean protein, helps maintain healthy muscle mass among the elderly. Healthy muscles mean lower fatigue and stronger limb function for independent major daily works for senior citizens
- Choline & Vitamin B12 are essential for healthy brain activity and cognitive function. Chicken is one of the top foods that fight Alzheimer's disease. One serving per day of chicken breast can take care of the most common nutritional deficiencies in the elderly
- Boneless chicken is rich in Vitamin B5 (Niacin) and Tryptophan, which aid Serotonin (happy hormone) production. This is very helpful in reducing the risk of depression among elderly
- Chicken is rich in Creatine, an amino acid needed for string contraction in muscles. Body synthesizes it from other amino acids, but chicken provides it in a form ready to convert to phosphocreatine, to store in the muscles and used for body movements
- Selenium in chicken regulates thyroid hormone and prevents chronic illnesses, a concern among elderly
- Dark meat from chicken legs is rich in zinc, which is needed to strengthen the immune system to resist infection and keep illnesses at bay. Zinc is among the most supplemented minerals among people of all ages worldwide
- Chicken is easy to procure, easy to cook and suitable for the elderly, especially those who live by themselves. Baked, grilled, fried, or pot-cooked, chicken can be prepared in many ways and there are few hundred recipes. It can be stored for longer with proper care and consumed later
- Chicken is highly beneficial for boosting immunity. It can be used in soups, as the base gravy for other dishes, or consumed fresh
- A pot-roasted chicken is a complete meal; is easy to cook and include in meals every day

### Benefits of Chicken for Pregnant Women

- During pregnancy, a to-be-mother needs to take balanced diet for the well-being of her baby. Chicken is one of the foods recommended to be consumed by a pregnant woman, as it is a good source of protein, essential vitamins and minerals
- Chicken is a highly nutritious food packed with proteins; 9 essential amino acids that provide the necessary support for muscle building and strengthening
- Chicken has low fat



content and does not cause obesity, making it a rich source of necessary nutrients in pregnancy

- Chicken is a rich source of Niacin or Vitamin B3, which stimulates brain development of the embryo and keeps brain healthy
- The consumption of 100 gms of chicken per day fulfils 50% of the daily protein requirements of a pregnant woman
- Chicken is a rich source of Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids and is low in cholesterol content
- Chicken liver is a good source of choline which helps in brain and memory function of babies in the early years after birth
- Chicken liver also contains folate, which helps prevent neural tube defects in babies.
- Chicken contains Vitamin A, Vitamin E, Vitamin B1 and Selenium. These vitamins and minerals have antioxidant properties that promote metabolism and boost energy levels
- Chicken supplies iron and zinc to the body which helps development of new cells. The iron from chicken is easily absorbed by the body
- These nutrients from chicken assist in the development of organs, cells and bones of the baby
- Chicken provides protection from chronic illness such as Diabetes, High cholesterol and heart ailments
- 100 gms of cooked chicken meat is the recommended daily intake for a pregnant woman

### Benefits of Chicken During Sickness and During Recovery Period

- Chicken is highly nutritious food, packed with proteins; 9 essential amino acids to provide necessary support for muscle building and strengthening during and after any illness
- Chicken contains Vitamin A, Vitamin E, Vitamin B1 and Selenium, all of which have antioxidant properties that promote metabolism and boost energy levels during illness
- Chicken supplies Iron and Zinc to the body which helps development of new cells. The iron from chicken is easily absorbed by the body during sickness
- Chicken has micronutrients like Zinc and Magnesium which helps building immunity during and after sickness
- Boneless chicken is rich in Vitamin B5 (Niacin) and Tryptophan, which aid serotonin production (happy hormone) which is helpful in reducing the risk of depression among sick person, especially after major illness
- Chicken provides protection from chronic illnesses like diabetes, cholesterol & heart ailments