

Module 8

CLEAN EATING 101

CLEAN EATING 101

The basis of clean eating is consuming primarily whole, unprocessed foods. The movement has evolved through the decades, and clean eating is now very individualistic – it means different things to different people. However, all followers of this approach agree that processed foods should be limited. Eating clean revolves around maintaining a balanced and personalized diet of fresh, unprocessed food, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats. For some, it also includes eggs, meats, fish, and dairy.

So what's the point of eating clean? Besides the moral and mental boost the words evoke, many advocates cite clearer skin, weight loss, increased energy, stronger hair and nails, improved mental health, and better sleep. Rather than simply going on diets, these individuals often make sustainable lifestyle shifts when they choose to eat clean.

Clean eating does not necessarily come with its own set of guidelines, but here are some tips to help you reduce your exposure to chemicals, hormones, and highly processed ingredients.

FIVE TIPS FOR EATING CLEAN

1| Keep it whole.

Stick to whole foods – those that occur in nature and don't require flashy packaging. Examples include fresh fruits and vegetables, grass-fed and free-range meats, dairy, eggs, whole grains, nuts, and seeds.

2| Experiment with home cooking.

When you cook for yourself, you're almost guaranteed a more nutritious meal. Restaurant food is often higher in salt and sweeteners compared to foods you might prepare at home. It's also often difficult to know the quality of ingredients used in a restaurant setting. Start small by keeping it simple and build your cooking repertoire as you learn more.



3| Limit refined carbohydrates.

You'll want to remove or at least reduce the amount of white foods (those made from white sugar or white flour) from your diet if you're aiming to eat clean. This includes all standard desserts containing white sugar as well as refined grains (like white rice) and foods containing white flour (like pasta, pastries, and bread).

4| Maintain consistent eating times and try not to skip meals.

Keeping your blood sugar stable greatly contributes to healthy food choices. When you wait too long between meals or eat processed foods that spike blood sugar – leading to a crash in energy – you're more likely to reach for foods high in sugar, fat, or caffeine to keep up your energy. If you continue this cycle of highs and lows, you may feel irritable and exhausted. By eating whole foods every few hours, you avoid extreme shifts in your blood sugar. Additionally, nutritious food choices help support more stable blood sugar regulation, which can help reduce inflammation.

5| Balance your plate.

You should aim to get protein, carbohydrates, and fat at every meal; use the Integrative Nutrition Plate as a guide. This will create optimal blood sugar levels and may stave off cravings and brain fog. Some examples of great protein sources include grass-fed meat, fish, tempeh, and legumes. Top-notch fat options are avocado, olive oil, nuts, and seeds. When reaching for complex carbs, try whole grains, like farro, brown rice, or buckwheat, and vegetables, like sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts, or artichokes.

AN EMPHASIS ON QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

The clean eating approach emphasizes quality over quantity – not all calories are equal. When you stick to whole foods, you're much more likely to keep your caloric intake at an appropriate level for your body and maintain a healthy weight as a result. It's easy to eat your way through an entire bag of potato chips, but eating several apples in a row would actually be difficult – see the difference?

Whole foods fill you up and fuel you, whereas empty calories – like those found in candy and chips – give you a quick boost of energy but often lead to a crash and hunger shortly after. Whole foods help regulate cholesterol levels and ward off cancer, dementia, and a plethora of other conditions. In addition, the high fiber content of fruits, vegetables, and grains keeps the digestive system in tip-top shape, which is essential to optimal health.



Eating whole foods ensures you get adequate amounts of essential vitamins and minerals, like vitamin C, magnesium, and calcium. Whole foods boast incredible nutrition profiles, so it's best to eat a wide range to ensure any nutritional void is filled.

Sure, you could pop vitamins in pill form all day, but nutrients are much more valuable – and sometimes more readily absorbed – when consumed through food as a whole package. Science is just beginning to discover the vast range of health-supportive compounds contained in whole foods, so if you look to supplements as your main nutrient source, you may miss out on more than you realize.

Have you ever heard the saying “the way you do one thing is the way you do everything”? If you take care of yourself by eating clean food, you may find it easier to also engage in self-care such as exercise, meditation, massages, and other techniques that help make your life rich and vibrant. When you feel great, you're able to move through your days with joy and ease, creating and nurturing supportive relationships and a career you love.

Eating cleaner is a principle that everyone can employ in some sense. How you define it personally is up to you as a bio-individual.

Use the clean grocery list and sample three-day clean menu on the following pages to inspire you to experiment with clean eating and coach your clients to do the same.

CLEAN GROCERY LIST

The following list includes simple suggestions for transitioning to a clean food diet. However, all whole foods are considered clean foods, so feel free to get creative and try new foods! Depending on your location, some foods may not be seasonally available. Consider this a general guide, but remember to explore the local produce options available in your neighborhood.

Vegetables

- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Garlic
- Kale
- Onions
- Peppers
- Spinach
- Squash
- Sweet potatoes
- Swiss chard
- Zucchini

Fruits

- Apples
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Berries
- Grapefruit
- Lemons
- Oranges
- Pears



Herbs and Spices

- Basil
- Cardamom
- Chili flakes
- Cinnamon
- Cumin
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Pepper
- Sea salt
- Thyme
- Turmeric



Condiments

- Apple cider vinegar
- Balsamic vinegar
- Hot sauce
- Pure maple syrup
- Raw honey
- Raw stevia
- Salsa
- Soy sauce or tamari



Proteins

- Beef
- Black beans
- Chicken
- Eggs
- Garbanzo beans
- Lentils
- Salmon
- Split peas
- Tempeh
- Tofu
- Turkey
- White fish



Nuts, Seeds, and Oils

- Almonds
- Cashews
- Chia seeds
- Coconut oil
- Flax seeds
- Nut butters
- Olive oil
- Tahini

SAMPLE 3-DAY CLEAN MENU



Day 1

- Breakfast:**
- Oatmeal with blueberries, coconut flakes, chia seeds, and cinnamon
 - Tea or coffee
-

- Lunch:**
- Brown rice with spinach, grilled tofu, olive oil, apple cider vinegar, sea salt, and basil
 - 1 oz dark chocolate
 - Water with lemon
-

- Snack:**
- Whole grain bread with nut butter and sliced banana
 - Fresh green smoothie
-

- Dinner:**
- Grilled salmon
 - Baked sweet potato with coconut oil and sea salt
 - Sautéed kale with onions and garlic
 - 1 glass red wine



Day 2

- Breakfast:**
- Poached eggs over whole grain toast with sliced avocado and tomato, sea salt, and olive oil
 - Tea or coffee
-

- Lunch:**
- Turkey wrap with hummus, cucumbers, lettuce, and tahini sauce
 - Apple
 - Water with lemon
-

- Snack:**
- Beet chips with guacamole
-

- Dinner:**
- Grilled grass-fed steak
 - Sautéed peppers and onions over rainbow chard
 - 1 oz dark chocolate



Day 3

- Breakfast:**
- Buckwheat waffles with fresh fruit, nut butter, and pure maple syrup
 - Tea or coffee
-

- Lunch:**
- Arugula with grilled shrimp, quinoa, red onion, sliced almonds, olive oil, and vinegar
 - Water with lemon
-

- Snack:**
- Whole grain toast with nut butter and raw honey
-

- Dinner:**
- Grilled chicken marinated in herbs and balsamic vinegar
 - Lentils sautéed with spinach, onions, and garlic
 - 1 glass red wine

REFERENCE

- Walters, T. (2012). *Clean food*. New York, NY: Sterling Publishing.