

EATING CLEAN FOR BEGINNERS

WHAT IS CLEAN EATING?

The major key to understand about eating clean for beginners is that it's more of a lifestyle than a "diet." By that, I mean eating clean isn't a get skinny quick kind of thing. Instead, it's a way to approach how you eat and what you put in your body. Clean eating involves choosing whole foods, avoiding processed foods, and creating a healthy, conscientious approach to what foods you eat. Making the choice to eat clean is to remove unnecessary fats, sugars, and carbs from your diet. It's about making better, more nutritious choices for your body. It's also about refusing to continue to put junk in your body. "Junk," in this context, includes processed foods, artificial flavors and sugars, foods with lots of salt and high in saturated fat, refined foods, and other foods that don't provide you with nutritional value.

This means embracing vegetables, whole foods, unrefined grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. The focus is on the quality of the food being consumed and the benefits these foods offer your overall health. The idea is to combine the clean eating lifestyle with an active life.

One meal at a time, you'll find clean eating will make you a healthier, happier person. You'll find that you crave "sweets" less and that foods high in saturated fat really aren't that satisfying anymore.

Keep in mind that there remains a decent amount of diversity among the "clean eating community" in relation to what clean eating entails. So, while there are people on all parts of the spectrum, I'm sharing my interpretation of clean eating, how I follow the clean eating guidelines, and what I feel are the most realistic, most beneficial and healthy aspects of the clean eating diet.

For me, the best thing about the clean eating approach to food is that it's not a diet, not about calorie restricting, and not about depriving yourself of things you love. It's about finding healthy ways to enjoy food and nutrition.

Here are 8 Great Guidelines for Getting started Eating Clean.

1. COOK YOUR OWN FOOD.

The easiest way to control what goes into your food is to be the one who is preparing your food. That way, you can control the salt, sugar, flavors, and fats that go in and you can work to keep those levels as low as possible. Ever wonder why restaurant food tastes so much better than home-cooked food? It's because restaurants tend to add a boat load of salt and butter to everything they cook.

2. READ THE NUTRITION LABELS.

When eating clean for beginners, you need to get pretty familiar with nutrition labels because they will tell you everything you need to know about the foods you're considering eating. Look for labels with relatively few ingredients and consider each ingredient in terms of, "Is this an ingredient I would cook with in my kitchen?" If not, pass. Pay attention to and avoid foods with labels that include words like, "hydrolyzed," or "modified," as those indicate

added processing and words that end in “-ose” because those indicate added sugars (think fructose). Look for labels with “whole grains” and “whole wheat” in the ingredients. If the food is high in calories, make sure the saturated fat and sugar levels are low and that the calories are coming from the fiber and lean proteins instead. Also, keep sodium levels as low as possible – your body only needs 250 mg each day to function but a typical American diet is way higher than that.

3. EAT WHOLE FOODS.

Whole foods are foods that haven’t been modified or tampered with in a lab or manufacturing plant. Since whole foods haven’t been processed or refined, no added sugars, preservatives, dyes, fats (including hydrogenated fats), or salt has been added to the product to add extra flavor or to enhance shelf life or appearance.

Whole foods include fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, unsalted nuts/seeds, whole grains, full-fat dairy products, and dried beans/legumes. In addition to escaping the added and unnecessary junk from being processed, the unrefined foods also carry more nutrients and fiber which is essential for your body to function. Make the food you’re eating do more for you.

4. AVOID PROCESSED FOODS.

Processed foods are easy to identify since they often come in a box or jar. The problem with processed foods is that they are high in added sugars and salt, low in fiber and whole grains, and high in fat (including awful trans fats and saturated fats). Processed foods include snack foods (fruit snacks, chips), candy, cookies, frozen dinners, bottled salad dressing, breakfast cereal, canned soups, bacon, granola bars, instant ramen, and flavored nut. Instead of buying these items at the store for convenience, next time, try making them from scratch, using whole ingredients. Your body will thank you.

5. EAT WELL-BALANCED MEALS.

Make sure the foods you are choosing contain the right amount of protein, carbs, and fats since all three are essential to body functioning anyways. For example, broccoli is a carb, but also provides a lot of fiber, antioxidants, and many other important nutrients so it’s a great choice when eating clean. To that end, the fats you are eating should come from unsaturated fats as much as possible, avoiding saturated fat and trans-fat if possible. This is the case with every meal you have, whether it’s a snack or a dinner. You want to be mindful of the breakdown of what you’re eating so you know what you’re putting into your body.

6. LIMIT ADDED FAT, SALT, AND SUGARS.

Since clean eating has the intention of eating food in its most natural, whole state, it makes sense that you would want to avoid unnecessary additives, like fat, salt, and sugar, when choosing your food. Fresh fruit should be all the sugar you need once you are on a clean eating track. The more you follow the clean eating lifestyle, foods you once loved, like doughnuts, hamburgers, fries, and more will taste overly sweet or salty. This is because your body and taste buds will be so used to the whole foods in your new lifestyle that these additives will taste needed and even overdone.

7. EAT 5-6 MEALS PER DAY.

Make mindful decisions for everything you choose to eat, like lean protein, complex carbs (as opposed to sugar) and fats, fresh fruits, and vegetables — six times a day in the right amounts. The typical clean diet usually includes three small main meals and two to three substantial snacks every day. Eating this way prevents you from over-eating, skipping meals, and feeling fatigued or jittery from unstable blood sugar levels. It also helps you lose weight.

8. DON'T DRINK YOUR CALORIES.

While you're making mindful decisions about what foods to eat, you also need to be mindful about how much water you're drinking. Water will likely be the number one thing you're drinking all day, every day. You'll find the more you drink, the thirstier you are for more and more. Drinking water will not only keep you hydrated and allow your body to function well, it will also keep you from getting hungry. One of the worst things to put into your body is soda. Soda is full of high fructose corn syrup or other refined sugars and provides absolutely no health benefit to you. Fruit juices are also a poor choice when eating clean. While they contain more nutrients than soda, they carry far more calories and sugar and far less nutrients (like vitamins and fiber) than you would get just from eating a piece of fruit.

For clean eating recipes, click below. https://www.asweetpeachef.com/recipes/?fwp_healthy=clean-eating.