

Spring Ahead with Clean Eating

Our bodies naturally cleanse every day. But in the modern world, environmental toxins and food additives are putting increasing stress on our organs.

The body protects you from harmful toxins by producing mucous or fat to prevent an immune reaction. But what happens when there are too many toxins in the body and too much mucous as a result? The body can carry up to 15 pounds of mucous, which can lead to excess weight, fatigue, poor digestion, food intolerances and a weakened immune system.

A safe and effective clean eating program clears out the toxins that are stored in the fat cells. By eating clean regularly, you can rejuvenate your body on a cellular level.

To be healthy, your cells need the following:

- Oxygen
- Healthy foods containing nutrients and minerals
- Proper hydration
- Well-functioning detoxification pathways

Simply put, when you are not getting these four building blocks for cell regeneration, you will not feel your best. You may notice issues like joint pain, susceptibility to injuries and infections, digestive disturbances and poor sleep, to name a few.

What Is “Clean Eating?”

This is a phrase that has become very popular in the past few years. Clean eating is not a fad diet, but a way of life. Clean eating means cutting out processed foods and instead, eating organic produce along with organic, hormone-free meat, dairy, and eggs from pasture-raised animals. By choosing

ingredients in their most natural, whole state including clean animal or plant based proteins, and preparing them in healthy fats, you reduce inflammation in your body, balance your pH levels, and improve vitality.

To paraphrase Hippocrates, food is medicine.

Following these three steps will get you there:

1. Remove processed foods from your diet.

This is a big umbrella, but it's an ugly one to live under. No more boxed cereal, frozen pizza, or on-the-go prepackaged meals and snacks, like Lunchables. Remember, these foods are supposedly designed to make life "faster," "easier," and "more convenient," not healthier. As often as you can, stick to whole, unprocessed foods, those as close to nature as you can get. Not only are they more nutrient and vitamin dense, but their extra fiber and water content will also keep your metabolism humming and keep you feeling fuller for longer. When you're at the grocery store, ask yourself, "Would my great-grandmother have eaten this? Would she even know what it is?" This will help you shift to nutrient-rich foods, such as spinach and kale instead of rich, sugary, and calorie-dense foods like ice cream, baked goods and crackers.

2. Lighten up on the inflammatory foods.

Yes, we're talking meat and refined carbs (think steaks and sugars). To be clear, it's not that all meat is bad for you... it's that too much meat is bad for you. A diet high in *conventionally* raised red meat and refined carbs can cause estrogen overload, whether from hormones in the meat or from the type of bacteria cultivated in the gut by people who eat a lot of meat. The "wrong" bacteria – the kind that doesn't metabolize estrogen – is predominantly found in people who consume large amounts of meats and refined carbs. I recommend a diet that includes pastured meats and dairy that lack synthetic hormones and antibiotics, and avoids the "white carbs" (sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and white flour).

3. Avoid “The Dirty Dozen,” the most contaminated fruits and vegetables

Conventionally grown fruits and vegetables are often billed as health food, but come with many traces of toxic pesticides. The produce listed below was deemed The Dirty Dozen by the Environmental Working Group because according to testing, they contain the highest number of pesticides. Whenever possible, choose organic or if you’ve got a yard, start a garden!

Meet The Dirty Dozen:

1. **Apples.** More than 40 pesticides have been found on apples, in apple sauce, and in apple juice. Removing the peel does remove a lot of the toxins, but it also removes most of the fiber and vitamins!
 2. **Celery.** If you’re making crudité, asparagus and cauliflower are a safer bet.
 3. **Strawberries.** Strawberries can carry up to 60 pesticides on their cute red skins, although frozen strawberries often show lower levels.
 4. **Peaches.** Mangoes are a safer option if organic peaches aren’t available.
 5. **Spinach**
 6. **Lettuce**
 7. **Kale**
 8. **Imported Nectarines.** Tangerines are a safer option, if organic nectarines aren’t available.
 9. **Imported Grapes.** Kiwi contains few pesticides and comes in snackable sizes.
 10. **Bell Peppers**
 11. **Potatoes.** Try sweet potatoes for fewer pesticides and a delicious taste!
 12. **Blueberries.** Frozen blueberries are somewhat safer.
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Detoxifying Beet Salad

Beets are an incredible, natural detoxifier for the liver. Thanks to high amounts of pectin, a fiber that helps clear toxins from the body, they're an amazing addition to a Spring cleanse. They're also antioxidant-rich and promote heart, lung, colon, and skin health so be "Smart" and eat up, even if you're not detoxing.

Ingredients

- 2 to 3 beets
- 1/2 medium-size red cabbage chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 small cucumber, chopped
- 1 small green apple, chopped
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- Cilantro, chopped
- Juice of 1 or 2 Meyer lemons
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper (optional)
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder (optional)

Directions

1. Boil a pot of water, add the beets, and boil for 10 to 12 minutes until they're cooked. Drain and let cool.
 2. Peel and slice beets.
 3. In a bowl, combine the sliced beets with the rest of the ingredients and toss well. Add salt and pepper to taste. You may also add cumin powder for added flavor.
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Spring Out Quinoa

The secret weapon in this innovative salad is the addition of (drum roll, please) a tea bag! Adding a tea to your quinoa as it cooks is like steeping tealeaves in a cup of boiling water. Basically you're infusing your grains with healthy active vitamins, minerals, anti-virals, anti-bacterials, and more. This recipe calls for peppermint, but if you're feeling creative, switch out your tea bag for your favorite flavors like ginger, orange, or green tea. It's simple, easy, and perfect for Passover as well as year-round.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups quinoa, rinsed in cold water
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water
- 1 peppermint tea bag
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Fresh mint, basil, cilantro

Directions:

1. In a saucepan, add grains, water and peppermint tea bag.
2. Bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, then remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes.
3. When it's done, add olive oil and fluff.
4. Garnish with chopped fresh herbs and serve.

Spicy Shakshuka

Shakshuka is a wonderful eggs-for-dinner recipe, though in Israel it is often a breakfast or brunch food served with pita or challah on the side. It's a one-skillet recipe of eggs baked in a tomato-red pepper sauce spiced with cumin, paprika

and jalapeno pepper (you can make it less spicy if you like). First you make the tomato sauce, which comes together fairly quickly on the stove, and then you gently nestle the eggs into the sauce and let them cook to desired doneness. In my house we try to load on the green veggies, so I also add spinach or chopped kale to the tomato sauce right before I add the eggs.

Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ small jalapeno, seeded and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 (28 oz.) can crushed tomatoes with juice (I like San Marzano)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water or broth
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt
- freshly ground pepper to taste
- 6 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cilantro or parsley, chopped (optional)

Directions:

1. Saute onion and jalapeno in oil over medium heat, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté another minute. Add tomatoes, broth, and spices and bring to a boil. Lower heat a simmer about 20 minutes uncovered until thickened.
2. Crack eggs into a bowl and add on top of sauce. Cover and cook about 4-5 minutes or until desired doneness (less time for runny yolks).
3. Remove from heat and sprinkle with fresh herbs. Serve immediately right out of the pan with whole wheat pita triangles.

Quick and Easy Quinoa Pilaf

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2-3 tablespoons coconut oil or olive oil
- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 4-5 crimini mushrooms, sliced thin (can use other mushrooms)
- 2-3 celery stalks, diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup of dry quinoa, rinsed
- 2 cups of water or vegetable broth
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried cranberries

Instructions

1. Sauté onions for 1-2 minutes. Add mushrooms and continue cooking for 2-3 minutes.
2. Add celery and sage and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add quinoa, dried cranberries and water or broth.
4. Bring to a boil.
5. Reduce flame and simmer for 12-15 minutes.
6. Garnish with a few dried cranberries and sage.