

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.