

A new trend begins to take shape

Eat Well Eat Clean

By Diane Welland
M.S., R.D.
Nutrition Consultant
and Writer



Teaching people how to eat a healthful and nutritious diet is more than just telling them what to eat and not to eat. It requires a good understanding of each individual's personal dietary preferences, health status, budget, commitment, culinary skill level and lifestyle.

"Clean" eating is a unique approach to nutrition education because it addresses all these issues, plus it has built-in flexibility making it easy to tailor to any kind of client. Furthermore, unlike other types of eating plans which people go on and off of, clean eating is a lifestyle emphasizing regular physical activity and the pleasures of the table along with healthy eating.

- **Don't Drink Your Calories.** Today most of us drink about 21 percent of our total calories, on a 2,000 calorie diet that's more than 400 calories. Health experts say we should be getting about half that amount. Clean eaters zero in on zero calorie drinks, making water their drink of choice. Next in line comes unsweetened tea, low fat or skim milk, 100 percent fruit juices diluted with water or sparkling water.

What are the rewards of eating clean? Aside from keeping you energized, clean eating reduces your risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, promotes weight loss, helps control blood

"Clean eating is a lifestyle emphasizing regular physical activity... along with healthy eating."

The basic core nutrition principles of the diet include:

- **Choosing whole, natural foods and minimizing processed foods.** This means limiting foods out of a box, bag, can or package. Not only does this reduce salt, sugar, fat and calories, it also increases fiber, vitamins and minerals by upping fruit and vegetable intake. The goal here is to start with fresh first.
- **Choosing unrefined over refined foods,** such as adding more whole grains to the diet like millet, brown rice and whole wheat breads and avoiding foods high in added sugars. Natural sugars like honey, maple syrup, date sugar and agave are your "cleanest" options.
- **Striving for naturally balanced meals,** which consist of all three macro nutrients -- protein, fat and carbohydrate. This is particularly important for protein since it is often lacking in most American morning meals and snacks. Eggs are ideal because they are high in protein (approximately 6 grams each), portable, (especially if hard cooked) and easy to eat and digest. "Clean" meals are also naturally low in fat, sugar, salt and calories.
- **Eating small portions** throughout the day amounting to 5 or 6 mini-meals or 3 main meals and 2 or 3 substantial snacks. This prevents people from skipping meals and overeating. It also helps stabilize blood sugar levels keeping energy levels high throughout the day.

sugar levels, blood cholesterol and blood pressure, boosts your immune system, leads to better sleep and cognitive function. Switching from a typical American diet to eating clean rarely happens overnight, it takes time, commitment and patience but the closer you get to achieving this goal the more benefits you will reap. *

Diane Welland M.S., R.D. is a freelance writer, teacher and author of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Eating Clean" © 2009 by Alpha Books.

MESSAGES

- Clean eating is both a diet and lifestyle plan that includes a balanced approach to eating, exercise and environmental concern.
- To receive the health benefits of a clean eating plan, one must strive for inclusion of all three energy yielding nutrients; protein, fat and carbohydrates in small portions throughout the day.