



The Ultimate Guide to Eating Clean - Clean Eating 101



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Introduction

Today, genetically modified organisms, preservatives and the excessive consumption of junk food rule both our grocery-store aisles and the American diet. While these additives may still be dominant, consumers are beginning to learn and listen to the dangers that these ingredients may have on our short- and long-term health. However, big-name brands aren't going down without a fight. In fact, they have been catching on to this consumer behavior for years and are still continuing to take action in hopes of winning back business.

How has this manifested? Primarily, in the “natural” food-labeling trend used by manufacturers across the globe.

If you have been paying attention to this shift in branding, you may have noticed that big-named brands are taking their products and transforming their labels and ingredients in order to position them as “natural.” But the truth is the term “natural” nowadays should be taken with a grain of salt.



Introduction (cont'd)

A recent report from CBS This Morning—which interviewed Urvashi Rangan, the executive director of Food Safety and Sustainability Center at Consumer Reports—states that “consumers are severely misled by the natural label.” Not to mention, virtually any manufacturer can put the term “natural” on its label when the product isn’t natural at all.

Fortunately, there is a simple alternative to these so-called “natural” products: It’s called eating clean. And, while we’re certain you have heard about it, we urge you to ask yourself whether you’re sharing the benefits with your clients. Here are some helpful points:



1. The Lowdown on Processed Foods

First, let's start by defining processed foods. The act of processing changes the form of raw ingredients in order to lengthen the shelf life of everything from prepackaged juice and cake mix to refined bread and sugar. While not all processing should be considered negative, many of the health risks and issues associated with processed and ultra-processed foods have been linked to everything from diabetes to infertility and even cancer, especially foods containing GMOs.

Consider this: Many of the processed meat, seafood and poultry that dominate our grocery stores come from industrial factory farms in the United States. These factory farms raise animals in extremely confined environments and are fed unnatural diets containing large amounts of pesticides, antibiotics and hormones. This harsh environment is not only unnatural and cruel to the livestock and fish that are raised here, it also endangers human health and our environment. To avoid consuming any of the bacteria, antibiotics and harsh chemicals that come from these factory farms—look for products that meet the USDA National Organic Standards or shop for products at the local farmers' market.





1. The Lowdown on Processed Foods

Encourage your clients to use the same shopping strategy when looking for other items in the grocery store. While it's convenient and usually more feasible to look for the discounted, packaged item, it's important to pay close attention to the label. The more ingredients the product has, the more likely it has been processed. You can also easily detect if something is processed by the name of the ingredient. Put simply: Can't pronounce it? Don't buy it.

Making small adjustments, like paying attention and being mindful of ingredients, will dramatically impact your clients' choices, and of course, their health. If any of the listed ingredients look unfamiliar or questionable, encourage your clients to do some quick research. If they truly take their health seriously, you won't have to push too hard to encourage a little self-education. Soon, they will have the knowledge they need in order to make informed decisions when it comes to what they put on their plates.



2. The Essential Guide to Eating Clean

From social-media posts to magazine publications, it's clear the clean-eating trend shows no sign of diminishing anytime soon. In fact, eating clean has become a major movement in the health-and-fitness space. Everyone from entrepreneur Martha Stewart to fitness sensation Jillian Michaels are putting a huge emphasis on consuming food in its most natural state (a.k.a. eating clean). But, putting aside its popularity, why is eating clean so important?

The primary goal and intention behind eating clean is to replace processed foods with fresh, nourishing foods. (Yes, it's really as simple as it sounds.) Say, for example, that you absolutely love croutons on your salad. While they are certainly a salad staple, they lack nutrition and are highly processed. By substituting croutons for raw, unprocessed nuts or seeds, you'll not only get the crunch you love, but also eliminate all of the added nutrients and preservatives that can potentially harm our bodies in the long-term.

2. The Essential Guide to Eating Clean

While many people are intimidated by any new diet that surfaces in the media—and rightfully so—eating clean is all about simplicity. So the act of following the diet is just as simple as the clean food you're putting into your body.

Now, let's analyze the word diet in association with eating clean. While it is certainly an effective way to transform your mind and body in the short-term, think about the big picture. Fresh, unprocessed food provides us with energy, prevents disease and is a safe way to shed pounds and maintain a healthy weight. With that being said, you should urge clients to approach the eating clean movement as a lifestyle change, not a short-term adjustment to their diets. Many are surprised to learn that the food on their plates is the ticket to a healthy, happy and more fulfilling life.



3. The Benefits of Eating Clean

Now that you understand the facts, let's explore the benefits of eating clean. Consuming whole, unprocessed foods is a healthy way to eliminate toxins from our bodies while also nourishing them with nutrients, vitamins, antioxidants and healthy fats—and we're just scratching at the surface. Along with helping us feel more nourished, foods like beets and berries contain plant compounds that can help fight cancer and improve brain function.

Along with preventing disease, consuming a whole, plant-based diet and being more mindful of the food we eat has been linked to a variety of different health benefits, including:

- Improved energy levels and overall mood
- A more restful night's sleep
- Enhanced athletic performance
- Healthier, younger looking skin



Beyond eating clean, you must put an emphasis on the importance of staying physically active, especially if your clients want to experience the long-term benefits. After all, physical activity and healthy eating go hand-in-hand.

4. Getting Your Clients Started with a Clean Lifestyle

Before your clients can effectively transform their lifestyles, they should understand the basic principles of adapting to a clean one. To make it simple, share these five guidelines with your clients before they venture off on their next shopping trip:

- Look for whole, unprocessed foods over those that are processed
- Increase vegetable intake and try to stick to a plant-based diet
- Eliminate saturated and trans fats
- Reduce alcohol and sugar intake
- Most of all, be mindful of everything you put on your plate



4. Getting Your Clients Started with a Clean Lifestyle

How to Navigate the Grocery Store

Navigating the grocery store can be overwhelming, especially for your clients who are on the verge of transforming their eating habits. To create a stress-free shopping environment, advise your client to shop on the outside edge of the store; this is typically where one can find minimally processed items, such as dairy, meat and seafood—as well as the foods that are in the most fresh, natural state, like fruits, vegetables and raw nuts.

Here are a few other tips for keeping the grocery cart clean:

- Create and organize a list before each trip
- Visit a new health-food store or shop at a local farmers' market
- Be prepared every evening: using grocery-based recipes will eliminate takeout temptations





4. Getting Your Clients Started with a Clean Lifestyle

Unprocessed and minimally processed foods to put on your shopping list:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Organic eggs
- Honey
- Unrefined grains, like those in Food For Life's Ezekiel Bread
- Raw nuts
- Oils
- Kombucha
- Unprocessed meat, seafood & poultry

The main goal is not to eliminate processed foods entirely; it's about focusing on every aspect of our meals and being more mindful of what we put into our bodies. While your client may come to you initially looking to lose weight, he or she will be pleasantly surprised to learn that eating clean will come with a number of other long-term health benefits as well.



5. Continuing Education with AFPA

Just like you, we share a passion for the health and wellness industry. If you want to take that interest one step further, consider the benefits of continuing education with the Holistic Nutritionist Certification program. This program provides unprecedented professional training that will supply you with a strong skill set and the confidence to work with any client seeking not only to prevent, but also to reverse disease and gain optimal health. As a certified holistic nutritionist trained in natural complimentary nutrition you will be able to work with clients to identify and help correct the nutritional causes of diseases and design personalized diet and lifestyle programs that optimize health.



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