



“Clean Eating”

What’s it all about?

Clean eating might be the latest food revolution to sweep the nation, but encouraging children to eat a diet which consists mainly of vegetables make it a tricky diet to blend into family mealtimes. Here’s our expert advice to help you to get everyone eating clean.

If you are a regular on social media you will probably be familiar with the current culinary buzzphrase ‘Clean Eating’ - also known as ‘eating clean’.

Usually found accompanying a picture of a breakfast platter of chopped boiled eggs and spinach or a spiralized beetroot and butternut squash salad, it’s become the latest healthy eating fad.

It’s been pioneered, in part, by the likes of Ella Woodward, Hemsley + Hemsley and Madeleine Shaw who, in the last few years, have released recipe books promising glowing skin, boundless energy and general all-round vitality simply by following their eating regimes.



If you thought Weetabix and toast for breakfast, a cheese and salad roll for lunch and a hearty spag bol for dinner was the epitome of healthy – think again! In their world it's all about packing your plate with a colourful array of vegetables at every meal and ditching carbs and sugar for pulses and nuts.

An apple for a snack is fine but juicing it with a pear, some kale and a cupful of coconut water is even better.

Scary as it all sounds, however, eating clean is not about being on a diet or following a strict regime.

For while it can help with weight loss, its appeal is more in the fact it has such huge health benefits. It is claimed it can reduce the risks of serious illnesses such as diabetes and certain types of cancer. But, in the short term, it can help boost energy levels, improve our moods and provide better immunity.

And to join in, you don't need to go to the extremes of Ella and her friends.

Pollyanna Hale, a weightloss coach to mums, said there is no official definition of clean eating, and there are many interpretations, but it's essentially about eating natural whole foods as close to how nature made them as is possible.

"[This means] no processed foods of any kind, including sugar and flour products," she explained. "Most clean eaters exclude gluten, a protein found mostly in wheat but also rye and barley, and some exclude dairy products too."

"It's not as strict as the Paleo diet, which excludes grains, dairy and legumes as well as processed foods. Ideally clean eating means choosing organic where possible too."

But it needn't be restrictive and can be as simple as

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making a pasta sauce by ditching the stock cube or dolmio for fragrant herbs and an organic tomato puree.

And it's not necessarily about cutting things out. It's about eating less processed food. You can eat your Bolognese with pasta, you might just want to reduce the portion of spaghetti in favour of a higher quantity of veg in the sauce.

Pollyanna, who helps busy mums get their body confidence back with online diet and exercise plans explained: "Some people like to call this clean eating, but I just think it's eating real food!"

"It contains more nutrients, vitamins and minerals than processed foods, and no preservatives or artificial additives, which can make some kids hyperactive."

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Whatever your tastes, intolerances, allergies – there are lots of clean eating creations and recipes for you. There are even recipes out there for chocoholics and those with a sweet tooth... Sweet Potato Brownies, anyone?

The real challenge, however, is introducing the food into a family diet. This is particularly tricky if you have young children, who have a tendency towards fussy eating.

Indeed Julia Willmot a mum and fitness expert

from Hampshire, said the chaos of family life coupled with budget limitations can also make eating clean a struggle.

However, she believes there are ways around this.

"Every weekend," she said, "I batch cook a load of veggies, whatever I have in, but generally peppers, tomatoes, mushrooms, courgettes and garlic."

"I try to get as many different coloured vegetables as I can in there, so as to pack in various vitamins. I then freeze them in five batches to be used during the week."

She suggests using the cooked veggies with mince on Monday for a Bolognese sauce, on Tuesday as ratatouille with fish and rice, on Wednesday in an omelette on Thursday with homemade turkey burgers and on Friday with sweet potato chips and fish.

Julia stocks the fridge with chopped raw carrots and cucumber which go into her son's snack box. They also provide something for her to nibble on when she gets a hunger pang.

What's more, Julia's family has also got into the habit of eating berries before breakfast. "We have this as a 'treat' time together in bed before we go downstairs. It might not work for everyone but it works for us – and also keeps the kids regular in the loo."

It has also become a tradition to have fruit before any 'cheeky' pud like jelly.



For more information on Pollyanna's weightloss for mums programme go to www.thefitmumformula.com

For more juicing ideas and recipes visit www.beyondfit.co.uk

If there are temptations in the house, it's easy to fall off the clean eating wagon, so Julia keeps the house a junk food-free zone.

"One thing we can't resist as a family is crisps, so I simply don't have them in the house. If they're not in the cupboard, I won't be tempted. Plus it's much easier to say 'no' to whiny request if they're just not available.

"Instead, we have them as treats when we're on a day out."

If you are still stuck for clean eating ideas for your children, Pollyanna Hale, suggests healthy alternatives to pizza and fish fingers.

"There are so many healthy foods that kids love," she said. "My kids love chomping on chicken drumsticks, new potatoes and steamed carrots and broccoli.

"Baked salmon is a pretty child-friendly fish as it's quite mild and I don't know many kids who won't eat peas."

Pollyanna also suggests a stir fry with meat or fish, rice and vegetables with garlic and soy sauce – quick to make and versatile.

The other child-friendly way to eat clean is by getting creative with the juicer.

Rachel Johnson, author of 3 Day Detox, said: "It's not just adults who can benefit from the powerful effects of juicing – children can get involved as well.

"Juicing extracts the liquid from the fruit and vegetables, leaving you with the pure live goodness from the raw produce and this is perfect for getting your kids to have all the nutrients they need to grow and thrive."

(We have included a selection of Rachel's juicing recipes below.)

Whatever meals and recipes you choose in your clean eating journey, and even if you only incorporate it into your diet once or twice a week, it will certainly have a huge benefit on your health.



Rachel's Juices for Juniors

The "I'm a cheeky" one

Apple, pear, cucumber and broccoli

This juice is an excellent source of Vitamin A, C, K, beta-carotene and folic acid, as well as containing potassium, calcium, and iron. A bright green juice that kids will love to make and enjoy.

The "look at me" one

Carrot, apple and ginger

This is a nutrient-packed treat for any little one! Bursting with vitamins A, B, B3, B6, C, E, K, as well as beta-carotene, calcium, iron and folate, this is a great all rounder for young people.

The "it's my turn" one

Apple, celery, blackberries and lime

A nutrient explosion that your kids will love! It's a deep purple juice packed with vitamins A, B, B1, B2, B6, C, E, K and folic acid. It also contains calcium, potassium and iron for an added boost for growing kids.

The "It wasn't me" one

Apple, spinach, cucumber and lime

Popeye would be proud of this one! Packed with beta-carotene, folic acid and iron, this juice really packs a nutritious punch. Add in vitamins A, B1, B2, B6, C, E and K and you have a juice fit for any little one!

The "Again, Again" one

Pear, pineapple, celery and lemon

Don't be fooled by this juice not being green for optimum goodness- this little gem is a real crowd-pleaser with little ones and parents alike. Packed with folic acid, beta-carotene, calcium and vitamins A, B, C and B6, this juice will become a family favourite really quickly.

Pollyanna's Courgette and Apple Muffins (makes 12)

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium courgette
- 1 apple, peeled
- 150g peanut or almond butter
- 80g honey
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- pinch of salt

METHOD: Preheat the oven to 180°c

Put the courgette and apple in a food processor to shred finely, then add in the other ingredients and blend again. Alternatively they can be mixed well in a bowl by hand – the muffins will have more texture from the grated fruit and veg. Divide the mixture into 12 muffin cases and bake for 25-30 minutes.



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