



5 CLEAN EATING HACKS

FOR AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE
(AND OTHER CHRONIC CONDITIONS)

~ TINA MARTENEY ~

WELCOME!

Our grocery stores are filled with tons of options when it comes to food.

If you want your meal to be quick, easy, already cooked, or even frozen for later - there's something on the shelves for you.

However, our food has also gotten so commercialized, with its importance thrown behind our budgets and a constant barrage of tasty-looking advertisements, that most of us don't even know where the food we eat comes from anymore.

This has created a growing population of sick people desperately trying to figure out what they are doing wrong... and how they can heal.

But, when searching for answers, they are usually handed a prescription and told to move on. This can be so sad to see because some (*not all*) of our problems can simply be coming from what we are putting into our bodies.

Even eating healthy feels complicated and labels are confusing... you barely have time to eat, let alone spend extra time with complicated recipes, right?

Well, as someone who has been challenged by over 28 official medical diagnoses, at least 6 of which are autoimmune, let me tell you something ...

Even though we may not have control over our autoimmune and/or other chronic symptoms all the time, the food we put into our bodies is one of those rare things that we do have some control over.

And to be honest, clean eating isn't a new concept or a novel idea. In fact, man was doing it long before grocery stores even existed.

And there is nothing about it that has to be complicated either -- really, it's just about getting back to the basics.

In this guide, I will share more information on the world of clean eating and give you five surprisingly simple hacks that can get you started without it being too complicated or hard.



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Now that that's over, thank you so much for being here! Let's get started learning about my **5 Clean Eating Hacks for Autoimmune Disease and Other Chronic Conditions!**



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LIVING IN A TOXIC WORLD

One of the things that surprises so many people when exploring clean eating and what it means to “eat clean” is the number of toxins that are not only in our food but also in our environment.

- Pesticides are used on our produce that cause inflammation and a host of other illnesses.
- Cancer-causing chemicals are located as main ingredients in our cleaning supplies.
 - **Need an alternative? Check out this Blog Post on [Simple Recipes for Healthy Homemade Household Cleaners](#).**
- Even chemicals are leached out of and absorbed into our bodies through the dishes and cups that we use.

Over time, these toxins build up in our body and clog up the function of the brain, organs, and skin. Heck, our gut health, which is extremely important if you are challenged by an autoimmune disease, chronic illness, and/or other inflammatory condition, can be negatively impacted as well.

This information isn't to frighten you; although, the idea can be quite frightening.

Instead, it is meant to show you that some of your mysterious chronic fatigue, digestive issues, and/or other symptoms could be a direct result of your dietary and/or lifestyle habits.

Knowledge is power and understanding the world around us and what we encounter allows us to make better choices for ourselves and our families.

While we can't eliminate toxins from our lives completely, we **CAN** control and manage a good amount of what we are being exposed to.

This is where clean eating comes in.



WHAT IS CLEAN EATING ANYWAY?

When you are used to buying your food in boxes and bags, the idea of “eating clean” can sound foreign and a little too far out of your league.

Not to mention we live in a world of fad diets that try to restrict and control everything we eat.

Is clean eating the same thing as a fad diet?

No, not at all.

To put it simply, clean eating is simply filling your diet with whole and natural foods.

If anything, it is a **lifestyle** that promotes vitality and uses the natural gifts of nature to nurture and sustain us.

The recipes you use can be as simple or as complicated as you want to make them, but **everything comes down to this:**

- Fruits and veggies
- Whole grains
- Clean meats and proteins
- Simple ingredients that don't have long labels or difficult names

The biggest challenge comes in the shift from eating foods that are partially (or fully) prepared to recipes with natural ingredients.

That usually sends people into the drive-thru lane starving or wasting a ton of money on food they can't or won't eat.

To hopefully avoid this, let me share a few simple hacks you can use to make it easy to begin.



THE 5 HACKS FOR CLEAN EATING

When I first started cleaning up my diet, I was just as overwhelmed as you might be right now, and there were several times I stared with a blank face at the grocery aisles wondering what to get.

These simple little tips and hacks are the biggest game-changers that made eating clean easier to adjust to and maintain over the years.

Remember, it's not so much about eliminating food or restricting yourself -- it is about switching to more nutritious and natural ways of eating.

DITCH THE PROCESSED FOODS

This might seem like an obvious starting point, but when most of everything that you might eat is processed in some way - this can be like asking you to just stop eating altogether.

Ditching processed foods does not have to be that dramatic or frightening, and I promise you that you won't starve.

Here are a couple of tips to make it easy:

- **Shop around the aisles.** Fresh foods and less processed foods are generally refrigerated or kept in more open space so stick to the produce section and the edges of the store as much as possible.
- **If you can't say it, skip it.** Boxes with long labels and ingredient lists with complicated things in them are more than likely going to be contaminated.
- **Learn how to read labels.** To make sure you know what you are buying, and what is in it, learning a little bit about food labels, and what they mean will clear up a lot of confusion.

You can also check out this blog post for some additional tips on [How to Go from Junk Food to Healthy Whole Foods!](#)



THE CLEAN 15 AND DIRTY DOZEN LIST

The EWG (*Environmental Working Group*) does a study every year on the fruits and vegetables that tend to have the most and the least exposure to pesticides. This is probably one of my favorite hacks because it is literally a list that helps you decide what to buy as organic versus non-organic.

[Here is the 2024 list from the EWG:](#)

<h3><u>CLEAN 15</u></h3> <p>**For this list, you can purchase non-organic if you wish:</p>	<h3><u>DIRTY DOZEN</u></h3> <p>**For this list, you should purchase organic if you can:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carrots ● Sweet Potatoes ● Mangoes ● Mushrooms ● Watermelon ● Cabbage ● Kiwi ● Honeydew Melon ● Asparagus ● Sweet Peas (Frozen) ● Papaya ● Onions ● Pineapple ● Sweet Corn ● Avocados 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strawberries ● Spinach ● Kale, Collard Greens, and Mustard Greens ● Grapes ● Peaches ● Pears ● Nectarines ● Apples ● Bell and Hot Peppers ● Cherries ● Blueberries ● Green Beans

And here is another blog post that talks about this more: [Is Eating Organic Food Really That Important?](#)

Please keep in mind that the general rule of thumb is to try and eat **about 7 servings of fruits and vegetables per day**. That might feel like a lot and to be honest, I'm not always the best at getting all those servings in either; however, it's still important to know the positive impact eating more fruits and vegetables (*and the right kinds of them*) can have on our health.

If you'd like to learn more about how I bridge the gap between how many fruits and vegetables I *should* eat versus what I *do* eat, [click here](#).

DITCH THE PLASTIC

One place that no one expects to find chemicals that cause health issues is in the packages that our food and water come in, and/or what we store and eat our leftovers out of.

Plastics contain a chemical called BPA that can leach out of the plastic and into whatever is in them. BPA can cause cancer, tumors, chronic inflammation, and even genetic issues.

Switching to ceramic, glass, or stainless-steel containers is more than just a healthy switch - your food will taste better and store better too.

If you'd like to see what I use and recommend, check out this blog post for [The Best Food Storage Containers I Use for Meal Planning](#).

DITCH THE SUGAR

Sugar is an important part of our body's functioning; it helps regulate a lot of functions in the body.

The problem is, most of the sugar we eat these days is overly processed and bleached.

Sugar is also addictive, meaning your body will crave it, and you will have symptoms when reducing it- so of course, it is added into everything to keep you hooked. That also means that overall, we get way too much sugar daily and are usually running on sugar overload.

My best hacks to cut down on sugar are to:

- Utilize the other hacks and avoid processed foods.
- Use alternative natural sweeteners like honey and/or agave nectar.
- Use fruit and natural fruit juice to sweeten dishes.

If you need some help with this, check out this blog post on the [Top 10 Foods with High Amounts of Sugar](#).



DITCH THE GLUTEN

Gluten is a protein that is generally found in certain grains like wheat, barley, and rye. It is also found hidden in tons of different foods under different names.

Unfortunately, it is one of the top allergens that go completely unnoticed by people when looking for answers to things like:

- Chronic fatigue
- Digestive issues
- Allergic reactions
- Inflammation
- And even severe illness

Finding out if you have a sensitivity can be determined from a simple elimination diet where you remove gluten, and several other common allergens, from your diet. After a short period of time, you then reintroduce those foods back in, tracking how your body reacts to each food. If your body reacts poorly, then you have a sensitivity to gluten (*or whatever other food you were testing*).

I have worked with so many that feel an almost immediate reaction to eating something with gluten who never had made that connection before. Even in my own journey, it wasn't until I followed an elimination diet before I realized what foods were giving my body and symptoms the most trouble.

Please just keep in mind that an elimination diet should be followed while under the care of a physician, specialist, dietitian, nutritionist, functional medicine practitioner, and/or coach. Elimination diets can be hard to navigate, especially because they can occur over a 6–12-week period, so if you want to have a successful experience, please do seek out support.

There is also a [program found here](#) that can be done on your own with an accountability and/or life coach that comes with amazing group support if that is something that you might be interested in.

In addition, here are two additional blog posts that you might find to be helpful:

- [Five Common Food Sensitivities and The Symptoms You Might Encounter](#)
- [What an Elimination Diet Is and How It Could Help You](#)



BONUS HACK: LIVING CLEAN

These hacks and tips are great to get you started with cleaner eating, but I know you couldn't have missed my earlier comment about toxins in other things we are exposed to that can also wreak havoc on our health.

Here are a few other things in your life that you might not know are exposing you to some harmful chemicals:

- Cleaning Products
- Makeup & Clothing
- Shampoo, Conditioner, Soaps, and Lotions
- Personal Care and Hygiene Items

We are lucky to live in a time where the clean movement is thriving and there are so many healthy revolutionaries offering clean products without chemicals.

This means that we don't have to live with toxins in our lives, and we don't have to live chronically ill because there is no easy way to learn how to heal.

We also don't have to take our autoimmune disease, chronic illness, and/or other inflammatory condition diagnosis and just accept things as they are.

Our bodies will naturally support us when we nourish it in the right ways, and clean eating can help with that. Add this to your toolbox and find the changes that work best for you!

WHAT'S NEXT?

I sincerely hope this guide has helped give you some ideas on trying clean eating for a healthier lifestyle; however, if you would like some additional support, accountability, or just someone cheering you on from the sidelines as you navigate life with autoimmune disease, chronic illness, and/or another inflammatory condition, please do not hesitate to reach out. Please also keep an eye out on your email for the new offerings and services announcements such as new blog posts, programs, recommendations, a private Facebook group, and so much more!



LEARN HOW TO LIVE WELL, EVEN WITH DISEASE

Hi! I'm Tina!

I am an autoimmune disease and chronic illness patient, researcher, warrior, writer, and advocate for people living with autoimmune disease and other chronic health conditions. I am a middle school teacher, teacher leader, and college adjunct instructor by day and an autoimmune advocate and writer by night.

Through my own experiences, I have personally earned the title to **over 28 official medical diagnoses, at least 6 of which are autoimmune** in nature, and have experienced **over 16 medically related surgeries** in the past 20 years. I am one of those people who understand some of what you may be going through because I've been there; **I am an autoimmune and chronic illness warrior just like you.**

I, too, have experienced **complex health symptoms**. I, too, have left doctors' offices with **more questions than answers**. And I, too, have felt very **alone in my struggles** at times.

Through my experiences with a lifetime of health challenges, a gift for writing, and a passion for sharing with others, I have now made it my mission to **support others** on a similar journey. I am here to provide **tools, research-backed resources, accountability, support, life coaching** and **inspiration** to help us all take control of our symptoms and **live our best lives, even with disease.**

If you are struggling with an autoimmune disease or other chronic condition, I encourage you to first discuss your symptoms with your doctor and seek medical attention if it is needed. Then, truly dig into all the resources this site and community has to offer and get to know various resources and ideas that might help you improve your symptoms too!

We are all more than our disease. And I'm here to help you prove it!

~Tina

[If you'd like, follow me on Instagram here!](#)

