



# Longmont Clinic

## Healthy Food Choices for Controlling Diabetes are Great Options for Everyone

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Individuals newly diagnosed with diabetes are usually delighted to learn that healthy eating to control blood sugar is what *everyone* should be eating to maintain good health. The focus today is on eating a wide variety of food, eating several smaller meals throughout the day, distributing carbohydrate foods across the day for energy, using unsaturated fats and filling up on high fiber foods.

Gone are the days of severe restrictions with lists of “forbidden” foods. Maintaining weight or a gradual loss of 10 to 20 pounds helps most people gain better control of their blood sugar. Sweets in small portions can be used as part of a balanced diet. Most people avoid “super” sweets like regular soda because of their rapid rise in blood sugar levels.

### Great Food Choices Include:

- **Whole Grains** — packed with energy and fiber they provide the fuel for an active lifestyle. Whole wheat breads and pasta, whole grain cereals and brown rice are good examples.
- **Fresh Fruit** — loaded with vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants and phytochemicals, this carbohydrate source provides energy while maintaining good health. Small amounts eaten through the day will limit the rise in blood sugar from this carbohydrate source.
- **Vegetables** — like their counterpart fruit, vegetables provide plenty of nutrients. Their lower carbohydrate and calorie content is an added benefit. A generous portion at most meals add the color crunch and flavor to round out a meal. A variety of fresh, frozen or “No added salt” canned vegetables are also good to have available.
- **Lean Protein** — protein is a necessary nutrient in our healthy diet. The trick is getting the protein without a high dose of animal fat (saturated fat) that often comes with it. Excellent lean proteins include skinless chicken and turkey, fish, soy products, lean cuts of beef or pork and low-fat cheese.
- **Fats** — the monounsaturated fats are the best choice in this category. Olive and canola oil, avocados, nuts and nut butters are good examples. Limiting use of saturated fats that raise cholesterol levels is important. Saturated (animal) fats to avoid include: butter, cream, lard, shortening and bacon fat. In addition, palm and coconut oil are also saturated.

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Exercise or activity is another powerful tool in maintaining good health. Not only does exercise reduce insulin resistance and lower blood sugar, it helps manage your weight, lower cholesterol and blood sugar, strengthen muscles, relieve stress and improve self-confidence and self-esteem. With all of those benefits, setting aside 30 minutes, 5 days a week to “move” is hard to resist. Walking, biking, swimming, dancing, and skating are all examples of great aerobic exercises.

Despite the best efforts to control diabetes with diet and exercise, many individuals still may need medications to address the problems associated with the production or use of the hormone insulin.

Longmont Clinic’s nationally recognized Diabetes Care Team, comprised of board certified endocrinologists and certified diabetes educators (registered nurses and registered dietitians), is available to provide information, education and support for all adults and children living with diabetes. For more information, call our **Endocrinology Department at 720-494-3119** or visit **[longmontclinic.com/Resources/DiabetesCareTeam](http://longmontclinic.com/Resources/DiabetesCareTeam)**