



Major Medical Association Endorses Plant-Based Diet as Primary Treatment for Type 2 Diabetes

By Michelle McCarthy
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A diet rich in whole plant foods can serve as the primary tool for achieving remission of Type 2 diabetes in adults, according to the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM), an independent medical professional association. The ACLM released an expert consensus statement titled “Dietary Interventions to Treat Type 2 Diabetes in Adults with a Goal of Remission,” which was published in the [American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine](#). The aim of the statement is to help clinicians treat patients with Type 2 diabetes using diet as a primary intervention.

Often used in scientific and medical fields, an expert consensus statement indicates the collective agreement of a panel of experts on a particular issue, thereby providing guidance and best practices.

The ACLM expert consensus statement is the first of its kind to endorse diet as the major strategy in obtaining long-term diabetic remission, without the use of medication or surgery. Many medical organizations already promote a balanced diet as part of diabetes management, but nutrition is still not widely recognized as a key treatment for [Type 2 diabetes](#) remission.

Internists, cardiologists, family physicians, endocrinologists, nutritionists, dietitians, and [lifestyle medicine](#) specialists from organizations such as the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology comprised the 15-person expert panel, which “agreed upon substantial aspects of using a whole foods plant-based dietary intervention to achieve disease remission,” with a focus on foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, seeds, and legumes. The statement noted that the guidelines “should help clinicians who manage adults with Type 2 diabetes in reaching shared decisions regarding remission as an optimal treatment outcome, the role of dietary intervention in facilitating this goal, and the specific aspects of diet and lifestyle that are most likely to result in success.”

More than 37 million people in the United States have diabetes, while around 90% to 95% of them have Type 2 diabetes, according to the [Centers for Disease Control](#). Type 2 diabetes has been linked with heightened risk for [heart disease](#)—the leading cause of death worldwide—as well as eye damage, sleep apnea, [kidney disease](#), nerve damage, and [stroke](#). It ranks as the most expensive chronic condition in the U.S., with \$1 out of every \$4 in health care costs going toward caring for people with diabetes.

The ACLM’s expert consensus statement is co-sponsored by the Endocrine Society and backed by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

“The consensus statements will not only empower clinicians and patients to use a plant-predominant diet as ‘food as medicine’ for achieving remission of Type 2 diabetes, but will facilitate shared management decisions based on current best evidence and structured expert consensus,” says Richard Rosenfeld, MD, MPH, MBA, DipABLM, lead author of the expert consensus statement and senior liaison for medical society relations at ACLM.

To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#). For meal-planning support, check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK’s easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.