

Quick Guides to the Health Professions

Dietitians

What is a dietitian?

Registered dietitians are uniquely trained food and nutrition experts who are essential members of the healthcare team and contribute to the health and wellbeing of Albertans. As members of interprofessional health care teams, registered dietitians are the recognized experts in translating scientific, medical and nutrition information into practical individualized therapeutic diets and meal plans for people.

What do dietitians do?

Registered dietitians translate nutrition science into practical solutions for healthier families. Dietitians work with health professionals such as nurses, physicians, social workers and speech language pathologists to manage nutrition for health promotion, disease prevention, and treatment of acute and chronic diseases with a variety of client populations in a variety of settings (including hospital, community and foodservice management). Dietitians focus on healthy eating and wellness throughout all stages of life.

Where do dietitians work?

Dietitians work in a variety of health care and private settings, such as: health and wellness centres, hospital patient care units, media relations, outpatient clinics, primary care networks, food companies, corporate wellness centres, home care settings, universities, privately owned practices or clinics, food and nutrition businesses, health departments and public health agencies, and food service establishments in hospitals, restaurants, and schools.

Education and preparation

A dietitian is a regulated health professional who has completed an accredited 4-year Bachelor of Science degree with a focus in foods and nutrition, as well as an accredited dietetic internship consisting of at least 40 weeks of practical experience to ensure the competencies have been acquired in a variety of practice settings. Dietitians must also successfully complete the national registration examination prior to becoming a registered dietitian. Many dietitians further their knowledge by pursuing a Master's or Doctoral degree.

Licensure

Registration with the provincial regulatory body, the College of Dietitians of Alberta, assures the public and employers that an individual has met the standards for academic and practical experience required for the practice of the profession of dietetics. Registration with the College allows members to use the protected titles listed in legislation: Registered Dietitian, Registered Nutritionist, Dietitian, and RD.

Professional organizations

College of Dietitians of Alberta
<http://www.collegeofdietitians.ab.ca>

Dietitians of Canada
<http://www.dietitians.ca>

Contributors to this guide

College of Dietitians of Alberta
<http://www.collegeofdietitians.ab.ca>

Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice, Western University Canada
<https://www.uwo.ca/fhs/education/ipe/index.html>



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