

DC 7. PAPER 13: Therapeutic Diet – I (SEMESTER III)

TYPES OF DIETITIANS

DIETITIANS

A dietitian, medical dietitian, or dietician is an expert in identifying and treating disease-related malnutrition and in conducting medical nutrition therapy, for example managing gastrointestinal symptoms or the effects of cancer cachexia. Many dietitians work in hospitals and usually see specific patients where a nutritional assessment and intervention has been requested by a doctor or nurse, for example if a patient has lost their ability to swallow. Dietitians are the only regulated healthcare professionals licensed to assess, diagnose, and treat nutritional problems. In the United Kingdom, dietitian is a 'protected title', meaning identifying yourself as a dietitian without appropriate education and registration is prohibited by law.

TYPES OF DIETITIANS

These are the 10 types of dietitians that can help you achieve your health and nutrition goals. Keep in mind that there are APDs with more than one specialisation, such as a neonatal dietitian who also performs the duties of a research dietitian. Listed in alphabetical order, these dietitians are:

1. Business dietitians

Business dietitians perform the role of resource persons in the business, communications and marketing industries. You may see them offering their expert opinion or knowledge about food or a particular diet on television or radio shows. They may serve as a columnist of a magazine or newspaper's health section, a resource speaker in nutrition-related events, or a resource person during the recipe creation and assessment process of food chains and restaurants. They can write books and corporate publications about food, health, nutrition and wellness. They can also serve as salespeople of food manufacturing companies that offer supplements and tube feeding equipment to the public.

2. Clinical dietitians

Clinical dietitians are the dietitians we see in health care settings including clinics, hospitals, nursing facilities and the like. APDs who serve as clinical dietitians are qualified to provide medical nutrition therapy (MNT), which is a personalised, nutrition-based therapy for patients diagnosed with specific health conditions such as diabetes. They also offer consultations to their clients and their caregivers.

Clinical dietitians work closely with other medical professionals like doctors, nurses, therapists, psychologists, dietetic technicians, pharmacists, social workers, and [other nutrition](#)

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[professionals](#) so they can perform their duties—such as formulating meal plans and evaluating their client's medical history—more effectively. They are also capable of developing and implementing health and nutrition programs.

There are also clinical dietitians with specialties in various types of feeding such as intravenous feedings (parenteral nutrition) and its types including peripheral parenteral nutrition (PPN) and total parental nutrition (TPN), as well as tube feedings (enteral nutrition).

3. Community dietitians

Community dietitians work in public health organisations such as community health centres and home care agencies. They create and implement nutrition and wellness programs for the benefit of the residents of the community, with a focus on children's, women's, and the elderly's nutritional needs. Other community dietitians focus on members of the community without access to healthy foods, persons with disabilities and those with special needs. Either way, the overall aim of these programs is to educate the targeted groups and their caregivers about healthy foods, proper eating habits, and good nutrition. Some community dietitians also do home visits for the members of the community who are very ill or weak to go to the community health centre.

4. Consultant dietitians

Consultant dietitians are dietitians who render their services on a contractual basis with health institutions and companies. This is a common work set-up for dietitians in Australia, Canada and the United States of America. They may also work in private practice. They can enter contracts independently just like any professional who works as a consultant and offer health and nutrition-related services and programs to their individual clients and the clients of the companies that contracted them. These companies may include gyms, fitness studios, and sports teams.

5. Food service dietitians

Food service dietitians work in company cafes, school canteens, restaurants, prisons, and organisations engaged in large-scale meal planning and feeding. They are in charge of the whole food service process, from planning the meals, coordinating with the kitchen staff for proper cooking, and evaluating the quality of the foods. They develop new menus, launch health programs to ensure the dietary requirements of the clients they serve are being met, and perform regular audits to maintain food safety standards and uphold quality control measures. They can also train and manage the food service personnel including kitchen staff, dietary aides or technicians, and food delivery workers.

6. Research dietitians

Research dietitians conduct research studies with a focus on food, health services, nutrition, and social sciences. Owing to their immersion in the academic research field, some research dietitians also end up working as university professors of dietetics. Their research studies may revolve around how the nutrients from foods interact with the human body and help prevent disease, or how a certain health policy or law affected the targeted population. They may also conduct surveys about food service processes for the purpose of quality control management,

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or examine the effectiveness of a particular nutrition program or treatment plan. You can find research dietitians in the academe, research organisations and public and private health agencies.

NUTRITIONIST VS DIETITIAN

| DIETITIAN | VS | NUTRITIONIST |
|---|----|--|
| Qualification <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Bachelor's degree-Completion of a Dietetic Internship-Passed a national exam-Maintains on-going education credits | | Qualification <ul style="list-style-type: none">-None required-Self-proclaimed title |
| Definition <ul style="list-style-type: none">-A qualified health professional who helps promote good health through proper nutritional habits | | Definition <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Someone who works with food and nutritional science, aiming to prevent diseases related to nutrient deficiencies. |
| Legal Status <ul style="list-style-type: none">-An expert on nutrition-Registered with the Commission of Dietetics Registration (CDR)-Licensed to practice diet and nutritional consultation | | Legal Status <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Not legally accepted as an expert |

ROLE OF DIETITIANS

Dietitians work across many different fields, including:

- 1) **Patient care** – dietitians in hospitals and nursing homes educate patients and family members on eating well. They work with them to make sure that diets meet individual needs. They develop menus to meet patients' nutritional needs. For example, they adapt menus for people recovering from illness or surgery, or with health conditions like:
 - diabetes
 - heart disease
 - swallowing difficulties
 - poor appetite
- 2) **Community and public health** – dietitians work to improve eating habits, health and wellbeing in the community. (They often work in community health centres). They also work at state or national levels to influence food policy and improve access to better food choices for everyone

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- 3) **Food industry** – in the food industry, dietitians work to:
- improve the nutritional quality of foods
 - develop nutrition education campaigns
 - promote food safety
 - work with food law and regulations.
- 4) **Sports nutrition** – dietitians help athletes, sporting clubs, children and people interested in fitness to eat better. They do this to help them achieve their sporting and fitness goals. For example, they may give advice on how to achieve peak sporting performance, or improve energy and activity levels.

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