



Dietitian (Registered Dietitian)

Overview

Registered Dietitians are health care professionals who are trained to provide advice about diet, food and nutrition.

Registered Dietitians teach individuals and groups about meeting their specific nutritional needs, and monitor their nutritional wellness to improve health and to help patients recover from illnesses. They use the science of nutrition to help people make healthy food choices, separating fact from fiction. They also separate healthy eaters and those that don't provide ideal nourishment for themselves.

Dietitians provide medical nutritional intervention on what types of foods to serve and how to prepare foods for patients, groups, and communities. Dietitians work collaboratively with other health providers to provide safe and specific nutritional needs to patients unable to eat or drink food normally.

In Canada, the term "nutritionist" is widely used interchangeably with "dietitians". However, the terms "dietitian" and "registered dietitian" are the official protected titles for trained and regulated dietitian professionals.

Main roles & responsibilities:

- educate and give advice on food, diet and nutrition
- manage the food service operations by providing meal plans/menus/caloric recommendations and the preparations of foods in hospitals, schools, day-care centers, correctional facilities
- educate clients/patients about the benefits of food, fitness, and health
- collaborate with nurses, occupational therapist, and other health professionals to promote healthy eating habits and make nutritious food choices
- teach at Colleges and Universities; and
- conduct research.

Who is suited to become a dietitian?

The person fit for this occupation is someone who is genuinely interested in caring for others through education and counselling.

If you enjoy learning and teaching others about the science of food and nutrition, and helping others change unhealthy nutritional behaviours to improve health, this could be the right profession for you.

Dietitians/nutritionists are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- a genuine interest in caring for people and empathy
- interest in health care, sciences, nutrition, and nutritional supplements
- interest in diet, wellness, and prevention of diseases
- good communication skills, strong organizational skills, accuracy with details
- ability to solve problems creatively
- enjoy developing and creating tasty, as well as nutritious foods
- see yourself working in a hospital setting, clinic setting, or mental health clinic
- willing to learn, train and do internships to complete your training; and
- a clean record, no prior criminal background.

Who employs dietitians?

Dietitians and nutritionists work in urban and rural settings. They most often:

- work in rural and urban hospitals, clinics, schools, resident care homes, community health centers, Aboriginal health centers for the different health authorities in BC
- work for food and pharmaceutical industries, food service/catering companies, or commodity organizations
- work for Colleges and University in teaching and/or research work. Additional education at the Masters level is needed to work in University faculty positions.
- are employed by government to work in correctional facilities, develop food, and nutrition policies, and make new research and discovery about the relationship between nutrition and health
- work as a consultant to other health care providers; and
- work in private practice/consulting.

Salary

Salary Range - \$24.74 - \$40.31 per hour/\$43,308 - \$72,118 annually

Education requirement to become a Dietitian

Requirements to entry to practice as a dietitian include:

- Complete a four-year undergraduate degree from an accredited university by Dietitians of Canada in food and nutrition. This includes an internship, which is a 10-12 month supervised practice period.
- In addition to a bachelor's degree from a credited university program, dietitians must also have the supervised practical experience that a dietetic internship/practicum provides.
- Successfully passing a board exam in nutrition and dietetics.
- Completed continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration.
- Undergraduate courses in biochemistry, physiology, nutrition, and research methods provide the foundation for students to approach new nutrition information with analytical thinking and sound judgment.

Courses to become a dietitian range from food preparations, food service systems management, business, economics, computer science, culinary arts, sociology and communication. You'll become the food and nutrition expert!

General High School Admission Requirements for University in BC:

- grade 12 English (obtain grade of 65% or higher)
- application of Math 12 or Principles of Math 12
- Chemistry 12
- one additional grade 12 academic science course (preferably biology)
- one additional grade 12 academic course
- an overall average of 70% or higher; and
- no individual grade below 60%.

Career Advancement

Some registered dietitians hold additional certifications in specialized areas of practice. Some of the certifications include paediatric or renal nutrition, geriatrics, sports dietetics, nutrition support and diabetes education.

An advanced degree, such as a Masters or PhD, will open opportunities to work as University faculty members.

Career advancement through further education and experience can lead to positions such as:

- clinical dietitians for a Critical Care Nutrition Support team
- directors of Foods and Nutrition Services for national or international companies
- health and fitness educator for governmental agencies such as the RCMP or national sports teams
- research coordinators for health regions; or
- adult education, nutrition, business administration, public health administration, or health information systems.

Career benefits of being a Dietitian/Nutritionist

- Rewarding feeling that you have helped in the prevention and treatment of disease or injury.
- Be part of solving food shortage and develop food security initiatives.
- Interaction with other health professionals and be part of a team.
- Interesting, varied, stimulating, challenging work because new knowledge, and new ways to help motivate clients and patients are always coming up.
- Well-respected member of the health care team.
- Transportability to work in most parts of the world and opportunities for advancement.

Average program costs

According to Statistics Canada, on average, the yearly tuition fees for full time bachelor's degree cost \$5,138 in 2010/2011. This does not include book fees, special fees, laboratory fees, or student membership fees.

Graduate students paid an average of \$5,182 in tuition fees in 2010/2011

Resources:

Education Programs

University of British Columbia

<http://www.landfood.ubc.ca/undergraduate/programs/fnh/dietetics>
Admission Information

<http://www.landfood.ubc.ca/undergraduate/programs/fnh/dietetics/dietetics-admissions-guidelines>

University of Alberta
<http://www.afns.ualberta.ca/>
Admission Information
<http://www.ales.ualberta.ca/prospectivestudents/HighSchoolStudents.aspx>

University of Saskatchewan
<http://www.usask.ca/pharmacy-nutrition/>
Admission Information
<http://explore.usask.ca/admission/requirements/sk/>

University of Manitoba
http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/human_ecology/departments/hns/index.html
Admission Information
http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/human_ecology/departments/hns/programs/index.html

[Brescia University College \(affiliated with The University of Western Ontario\)](#)
Admission Information
<http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/admissions/index.html>

[University of Guelph](#)
Admission Information
<https://admission.uoguelph.ca/template.aspx?SiteID=2361dae6-557b-4728-897d-da3406223de9>

[Ryerson University](#)
Admission Information
http://www.ryerson.ca/nutritionandfood/admission_information/index.html

[University of Ottawa](#)
Admission Information
<http://www.admission.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=2603>

[McGill University](#)
Admission Information
<http://www.mcgill.ca/dietetics/programs/faqs>

[Mount Saint Vincent University](#)
Admission Information
<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/beamountstudent/HighSchoolStudents/default.aspx>

[St. Francis Xavier University](#)
Admission Information
<http://www.stfx.ca/prospective/conversation/faqs/>

[Acadia University](#)
Admission Information
<http://admissions.acadiu.ca/>

Prince Edward Island

[University of Prince Edward Island](http://www.upei.ca)

Admission Information

<http://studentservices.upei.ca/prospectivestudents>

Financial Aid

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml

There are many financial resources available to support students during their bachelor's degree. You may also be able to obtain a grant or scholarship from a corporation, community or civic group, philanthropic or religious organization or directly from the school or college you are interested in attending. Grants and student loans are also available

Association

Dietitians of Canada

<http://www.dietitians.ca/>