

## Registered Dietitian: The Nutrition Expert

### ***What is a registered dietitian?***

A registered dietitian (RD) is a nationally credentialed health professional who has:

- Earned at least a bachelor's degree in Nutrition at a U.S. regionally accredited college or university.
- Completed at least 900 - 1200 hours of supervised practice in clinical, community, and food service.
- Passed the Commission on Dietetic Registration RD exam & completes continuing education requirements.

### ***What does a registered dietitian do?***

The majority of RDs work in the **treatment and prevention of disease by administering Medical Nutrition Therapy**, often part of medical teams. RDs work in:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hospitals, HMOs &amp; Health Clinics</li> <li>▪ School nutrition</li> <li>▪ Community &amp; public health settings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research, academia &amp; private practice</li> <li>▪ Food and nutrition industry</li> <li>▪ Food Banks &amp; WIC programs</li> </ul> |
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### ***How can registered dietitians be a useful resource for Washington State Policy development?***

#### RD's are Food & Nutrition Experts

With **over 1600 dietetic professionals across Washington**, RDs represent a significant group advocating for health issues. As food and nutrition experts, RDs are **proficient in the most current research** pertaining to:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diabetes</li> <li>▪ Obesity</li> <li>▪ HIV/AIDS</li> <li>▪ Heart disease</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Malnutrition</li> <li>▪ Child development</li> <li>▪ Kidney &amp; Liver disease</li> <li>▪ Cancer</li> </ul> |
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#### RD's use Evidenced-Based Results

An estimated 500,000 adults living in Washington are diagnosed with **diabetes**. This is almost a 55% increase from 1994 to 2007. For patients with diabetes receiving Medical Nutrition Therapy, there is a:

- 9.5% reduction in hospital utilization
- 23.5% reduction in physician visits

In 2002, there were 562,297 hospitalizations for **heart disease** in Washington, costing \$7.7 billion. For patients with heart disease receiving Medical Nutrition Therapy, there is a(n):

- 8.6% reduction in hospital utilization
- 16.9% reduction in physician visits

#### RD's can Save Healthcare Dollars

- \$350 annual savings per patient with obesity & Type 2 diabetes receiving Medical Nutrition Therapy.  
*Source: University of Virginia School of Medicine, 2004*
- \$4.28 savings for each dollar spent on Medical Nutrition Therapy provided by registered dietitians.  
*Source: Massachusetts General Hospital, 2001*
- \$728,772 in annual savings from reduced cardiac claims with patients receiving MNT.  
*Source: Pfizer Corporation, 2001*

*Let us support you in making sound health and nutrition policy. Contact Washington State Dietetic Association's Public Policy Team for information on issues related to health, food, and nutrition.*