

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 1200 hours of supervised practice in clinical, community, and food service.
- Passed the American Dietetic Association RD exam & completes continuing education requirements.

What does a Registered Dietitian do?

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

- Hospitals, HMOs & Health Clinics
- School nutrition
- Community & public health settings
- Research, academia & private practice
- Food and nutrition industry
- Food Banks & WIC programs

How can Registered Dietitians be a useful resource for Washington State policy development?

RD's are Food & Nutrition Experts

With **over 1500 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:

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- HIV/AIDS
- Malnutrition
- Child development
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Kidney & Liver disease

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 (MNT), 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 (MNT), 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 MNT.
Source: University of Virginia School of Medicine, 2004
- \$4.28 savings for each dollar spent on MNT 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.