

# Dietician



**Health**  
South Western Sydney  
Local Health District

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## What is a Dietician?

Dietitians apply the art and science of human nutrition to help people understand food and health relationships and make dietary choices to get the most out of their lifestyle. Dietitians are university-trained experts in food and nutrition and are trained to provide a wide range of professional services.

## Roles of a Dietician

- Collect and assess data relating to the nutritional health of individuals and groups
- Plan appropriate diets and menus to meet the needs of individuals whose medical condition can be treated or controlled by diet therapy
- Working in partnership with medical practitioners and other health professionals to manage the dietary and nutritional needs of clients
- Counsel individuals on appropriate diets and the planning and preparation of food
- Manage nutrition and related health and/or food services in an institution
- Plan and conduct nutrition education for community groups to promote appropriate dietary practice in the community
- Provide food and nutrition information to fellow staff and the general public
- Participate in the training of dietetic and other students
- Develop nutrition resource materials for individuals, community groups, schools and other health professionals
- Conduct and evaluate dietary studies and other food and nutrition-related research
- Provide advice on the development of food and nutrition policies
- Act as consultants to provide food service assessments, nutrition education, training and counseling, and research support to hospitals, nursing homes and other institutions
- Participate in Health promotion activities and programs.

## Sports Dietician

A sports dietitian plans diets for athletes so they will eat the correct balance of foods needed for strenuous or extended physical activity. Sports dietitians liaise with athletes and coaches to implement maximally effective nutritional programs.

## Career Opportunities

Nutrition is a fairly small but rapidly expanding field with good employment prospects and graduates find employment in a wide variety of roles and settings: patient care and education in hospitals, nutrition and health education in community health centres, public health nutrition and food and nutrition policy in government departments, private practice and consultancy, education and training, food industries, health promotion and nutrition research. Relatively new areas are in the fields of sports nutrition, publishing and the media. Dietitians have a high level of contact with the public and some work on a part-time basis.

## Qualifications Required

Dietetic courses vary depending on the university. Courses tend to be a one to two year master degree following a Bachelor of Science degree, or a four year integrated undergraduate course. Visit the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) website at [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au) for a list of accredited dietetic courses in Australian universities. Prerequisite subjects, or assumed knowledge, in one or more of English, mathematics, higher level mathematics, physics, biology and chemistry are normally required.

## **Supervision Provided**

A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support.

## **What sort of person should I be?**

- Interested in food, nutrition and health
- Enjoy working with people
- Interested in promoting good health and wellbeing
- Committed to quality service provision and quality improvement principles
- Aware of and understanding the needs of food requirements off people from diverse cultures and backgrounds

## **Personal Skills required of a Dietician**

- Able to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds
- Good organisational and time management skills
- Able to work as part of a team
- Aptitude for science.
- Enjoy food and food preparation
- Interested in health and wellbeing