



Dietitians and Nutrition Professionals

Dietitians and Nutritionists in California

Dietitians and other nutrition professionals provide medical nutrition therapy (MNT) necessary to prevent, manage or treat a medical condition, illness, or injury. MNT involves: 1) nutrition assessment (e.g. examination of the patient's medical history and possible drug-nutrition interactions), and 2) provision of nutrition therapy (e.g. development of nutrition care plans for individuals or groups of patients in licensed institutional facilities or private office settings).

Work environments include hospitals, nursing care facilities, schools, community and public health settings, and private practice. Some diseases and conditions where MNT is medically necessary include cardiac conditions, renal disease, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes.

Note: California law permits anyone to provide advice on proper nutrition. However, MNT, which includes diet therapy for treatment of an individual's disease, condition or injury, may only be provided by licensed physicians and surgeons, registered dietitians and other nutrition professionals.

- California Dietetic Association (www.dietitian.org)
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco/ocos077.htm)

Education

California dietitians have graduated from an accredited college or university with a minimum of a bachelor's degree in dietetics, foods and nutrition, or food service systems management. California's "other nutrition professionals" have graduated from an accredited college or university with at least a master's in clinical nutrition.

Note: There is no state definition of a "certified nutritionist." It is a term that is verified on a certificate from a vocational school. These schools may or may not require a high school diploma.

Credentialing: Registration, Certification

To provide MNT in California as a Registered Dietitian, one must be credentialed by the [Commission on Dietetic Registration \(CDR\)](http://www.cdrnet.org) of the American Dietetic Association. The initials "R.D." after a practitioner's name indicates that he or she is a Registered Dietitian and has met CDR's education and examination requirements.

Although not required, some dietitians may also seek Board Certification as a Specialist in Renal Nutrition (RD, CSR) or Pediatric Nutrition (RD, CSP). Dietitians with the *Fellow*

of the American Dietetic Association (FADA) certification have earned a master's or doctoral degree and have at least eight years of work experience.

Referrals and Reimbursement

California requires a referral by a patient's physician or other health care provider authorized to prescribe dietary treatments before MNT can begin. Also, non-RD nutrition professionals must have their qualifications validated by the referring physician for each patient. Contact your health plan to find out if MNT is covered.

To ensure a dietitian is registered, contact:

Commission on Dietetic Registration
120 South Riverside Plaza, Ste. 2000, Chicago, Illinois 60606
Phone: (800) 877.1600
Website: www.cdrnet.org

To file a complaint about a dietitian, contact:

Commission on Dietetic Registration (see above) OR
Attorney General's Office (see below) OR
California Dietetic Association
7740 Manchester Avenue, Ste. 102, Playa Del Rey, CA 90293
Phone: (310) 822.0177
Website: www.dietitian.org

To file a complaint about nutrition professionals, contact:

Attorney General's Office, California Department of Justice
Attn: Public Inquiry Unit
P.O. Box 944255, Sacramento, CA 94244-2550
Phone: (800) 952.5225
Website: www.ag.ca.gov/consumers/mailform.htm

How Can I Find One?

For MNT services, your physician or other health care professional will provide a referral. For other nutrition advice, you may ask for recommendations or search for your own RD or nutrition professional. As noted above, check for registration and health plan coverage.

Additional Online Resources *

American Dietetic Association http://www.eatright.org/Public	Find a Nutrition Professional
Commission on Dietetic Registration www.cdrnet.org	Find a Pediatric Nutrition Specialist Find a Renal Nutrition Specialist

* NOTE: Association databases of members may not include all licensed practitioners.