

Dietitians in Aboriginal Communities

Feeding Mind Body and Spirit



The facts	Working collaboratively with communities:
The intake of traditional foods is associated with higher intakes of protein and vitamins and minerals like Vitamin A, D and iron and zinc.	Dietitians respect traditional knowledge, values and health practices. They apply holistic prevention and health promotion strategies for improved individual, family and community health. They develop culturally appropriate nutrition education resources.
Reported food insecurity rates are much higher in Aboriginal households. For example, 33% of urban Aboriginal households are food insecure and 14% are severely food insecure.	Dietitians build food security in communities through education and community mobilization. They help to create supportive environments that will provide communities with access to affordable and healthy food.
The rate of gestational diabetes mellitus among First Nations women is four times higher than the general Canadian population. Significantly fewer urban Aboriginal mothers vs. non-Aboriginal mothers initiate breastfeeding .	Dietitians provide counselling and support to help ensure healthy outcomes for both mother and infant. They work for successful programs such as the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program.
The rates of nutrition-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity are two to three times higher among Aboriginal people compared to the general population. One in three First Nations peoples has diabetes and the Canadian Diabetes Association estimates the economic burden of diabetes will be almost \$17 billion by 2020.	Dietitians provide nutrition interventions that deliver similar results to more costly medications with less risk – modifiable health risks are improved and chronic disease progression is delayed.

References and further details available at www.dietitians.ca/aboriginalnutrition



Aboriginal Nutrition Network



Dietitians promote health through food and nutrition



Collaborative. Evidence-based

Evidenced Based Practice

Dietitians translate complex scientific evidence into practical solutions to promote health and manage special health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, allergies and obesity.

Collaborative approach

Dietitians are valuable members of the health care team, working collaboratively with other health care professionals including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, and speech language pathologists.

Dietitians individualize information, care plans, and programs to meet the unique needs of clients and communities.

Regulated health professionals

Dietitians are regulated health professionals. The title 'dietitian' is protected by law, just like physician, nurse and pharmacist. Nutritionist is not a protected title – that means anyone can use it.*

You can identify a dietitian by the initials RD or PDt after their name. To use these titles, the dietitian must meet and maintain provincial registration requirements.

**except in Alberta, Quebec and Nova Scotia*

***except in Quebec*

Dietitians work in diverse roles and environments

Dietitians work in the community, health care, food services and private practice as:

Practitioners: specializing in working with individuals and groups to improve eating habits and address the nutritional needs of people with complex health problems to improve health outcomes

Policy Makers: advising government at all levels on population health strategies and regulatory measures

Leaders: in all aspects of food systems, including food security and sustainability, food service management, production and marketing

Knowledge Brokers: conducting research, answering questions and translating science into best practices

Educators: of health professionals, school teachers, fitness instructors and future dietetic professionals

University-educated

Dietitians are university educated with at least 1250 hours of supervised, hands-on training in food systems, disease management, population health, communications and counselling. They must pass a registration exam to become a regulated health professional.**

Ongoing professional development is not only a core value but a requirement.