

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DIETITIAN AND A NUTRITIONIST?

- The title "Registered Dietitian", "Professional Dietitian", and "Dietitian" are protected by law -- through provincial legislation -- so that only qualified practitioners who have met education qualifications can use that title.
- Dietitians who have met national standards for education and training and who are members of the provincial regulatory bodies can use one of the following designations -- RD, RDN, PDt or RDt (or the French equivalent Dt.P.).
- A dietitian is a health professional who has a Bachelor's degree, specializing in foods and nutrition, as well as a period of practical training in a hospital or community setting. Many dietitians further their knowledge by pursuing a Master's or Doctoral degree.
- Dietitians are members of a provincially regulated profession that has Public Protection as their mandate. Dietitians are held accountable for their conduct and the care they provide.
- The term Nutritionist is not protected by law in all provinces so people with different levels of training and knowledge can all themselves a "Nutritionist". The title "Nutritionist" is protected for dietitians in some provinces and dietitians do use the title "Nutritionists". As the term "Nutritionist" is not a protected title in some provinces, you should contact your provincial regulatory body to ensure that you are receiving services from a dietitian.
- A variety of titles have been used by unqualified people to describe their involvement in nutrition related practice. Many use the term "registered" with a variation of "nutrition" as a title. You should be careful to ensure that the person is a qualified nutrition professional. You can contact Dietitians of Canada or the Provincial regulatory body to obtain a list of Dietitians in your area.
- Typically dietitians working in a hospital or health care institution will have a job title that uses the term "Dietitian" and will focus on clinical care of the patient or manage the food service. Dietitians working in community settings will typically have a job title that uses "Nutritionist" and focus on healthy eating and wellness at various stages of the lifecycle.

DC is a professional association that represents over 5,000 dietitians across Canada.

DC sets national standards for undergraduate dietetic programs, dietetic internships, and graduate degree practicum programs.

Visit DC's website at www.dietitians.ca to find out more about "A Career in Nutrition."

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