

dietitian?
nutritionist?



nutrition therapist?
diet expert?

Registered Dietitians (RDs) are the only qualified health professionals that assess, diagnose and treat diet and nutrition problems at an individual and wider public health level. Uniquely, dietitians use the most up to date public health and scientific research on food, health and disease, which they translate into practical guidance to enable people to make appropriate lifestyle and food choices.

Dietitians are the only nutrition professionals to be statutorily regulated, and governed by an ethical code, to ensure that they always work to the highest standard. Dietitians work in the NHS, private practice, industry, education, research, sport, media, public relations, publishing, Non Government Organisations (NGOs) and government. Their advice influences food and health policy across the spectrum from government, local communities and individuals.

Is their title protected by law? Yes - only those registered with the statutory regulator, the Health Professions Council (HPC) can call themselves a Dietitian.

What qualifications do they have? Minimum requirement is BSc Hons in Dietetics or BSc Hons in related biological science with post graduate diploma or degree.

These courses are structured to include basic and applied sciences and research methods underpinning nutrition and dietetics, complemented by social and behavioural sciences and the theories of communication in order to support the development of the skills required for dietetic practice.

All courses require a period of supervised practice, including in NHS settings, where an individual must demonstrate competence before being eligible to apply for registration.

The British Dietetic Association is the professional body and Trade Union for dietitians and as such is responsible for designing the curriculum for the profession.

Courses must be approved by the HPC and demonstrate that graduates meet the Standards of Proficiency, Dietetics.

Who are they regulated and quality assured by? The HPC's role is to protect the public. They are an independent, UK-wide health regulator. They set standards of professional training, performance and conduct for 14 professions. They keep a register of health professionals who meet their standards and take action if registered health professionals fall below those standards. Registered professionals keep up to date through compulsory Continuing Professional Development (CPD).



dietitian

If an individual is not happy with treatment they are given, or if they are worried about the behaviour or health of a registered health professional, they can approach the HPC who will investigate and take action.

How can I check? Health Professions Council online register - www.hpc-uk.org

Where do they work? Dietitians work across all age groups, many care pathways and in a great variety of organisations and settings including mental health, learning disabilities, community, acute and public health in the NHS and industry, education, and the media.

They work as integral members of multi-disciplinary teams to treat complex clinical conditions such as eating disorders, chronic fatigue, irritable bowel syndrome and diabetes. They provide advice to caterers to ensure nutritional care of all clients in NHS and care settings and plan and implement public health programmes to promote health and prevent nutrition related disease. A key role is the education and training of other health and social care workers.

What type of treatments do they offer? Dietitians interpret the science of nutrition into practical advice and options for clients, patients, carers and colleagues using a broad range of disciplines such as communication behaviour change and pharmacology. They advise and help to maintain nutritional status when clients want to follow alternative therapies e.g. diets for autism, exclusion diets.

They use recognised methodologies to critically appraise the evidence base which includes all forms of evidence and research; Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs), 'grey literature' best practice statements and professional consensus statements.

They cannot offer advice based on personal opinion or beliefs or where there would be personal financial benefit.

Dietitians are legally able to supply and administer prescription only medicines e.g. insulin, phosphate binders and pancreatic enzymes, through patient group directions. They can also adjust medication through robust locally governed Trust protocols.

What products do they use and can they order on drug charts?

Dietitians are able to manage the whole system from advice and recommendation to a patient's access to all NHS approved borderline substances (ACBS) nutritional products and supplements, with or without prescription. Dietitians are able to manage i.e. ordering and adjusting dosages of nutritional supplements directly on the patients drug chart.

dietitian

Nutritionists work in different roles including public health, health improvement, health policy, local and national government, in the private and third sectors; in education and research.

Many employers of nutritionists in all sectors preferentially recruit Registered Nutritionists.

Registered Nutritionists often work directly with healthy individuals and, if they are properly overseen or qualified, with aspects of care in high risk groups or patients, following supplementary guidance on working with individuals.

Is their title protected by law? No – anyone can call themselves a Nutritionist, however only registrants with the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) can call themselves a 'Registered Nutritionist' or 'Registered Public Health Nutritionist'.

What qualifications do they have? There are many available degree courses in nutrition. Courses that have applied and met strict standards of professional education in nutrition are accredited by the UKVRN and graduates from these courses have direct entry onto the register.

Graduates from non-accredited nutrition courses must demonstrate a strong underpinning knowledge in the evidence-based science of nutrition to be accepted onto the UKVRN.

However, a nutritionist who is not registered with the UKVRN may not have met or be able to meet the UKVRN's recognised standards and competencies in underpinning knowledge and professional skills.

Who are they regulated and quality assured by? Nutritionists are not required to be registered in order to work in the UK. Many nutritionists belong to the voluntary self regulated professional register, UKVRN, held at present by the Nutrition Society and use some version of the title 'Registered Nutritionist'.

Applicants must provide evidence of competency and must show that they work within their own scope of practice, using Standards of Competency in Nutrition or Public Health Nutrition and within the Code of Ethics and Statement of Professional Conduct.



nutritionist

Registrants are expected to keep up to date through Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Appropriate action is taken if any individual on the register is found to have acted against or below the UKVRN's high standards.

How can I check? UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists - www.nutritionistsociety.org.uk/register

Where do they work? Nutritionists work in all non-clinical settings such as in Government, food industry, research, teaching, sports & exercise industries, international work in developing countries, media and communications, animal nutrition, third sector.

There are many nutritionists employed within the NHS, or working freelance as consultants.

Nutritionists work with people who are well, without any known existing medical conditions, to prevent disease.

They cannot work on hospital wards without supervision from a regulated health professional such as a dietitian.

What type of treatments do they offer? Registrants of the UKVRN provide a range of interventions based on prevention of disease and based around a sound evidence base. They use recognised methodologies to critically appraise the evidence base - this is set out in the Statement of Professional Conduct.

Nutritionists who are not part of the UKVRN may offer advice based on personal opinion or belief.

What products do they use and can they prescribe on drug charts?

A Registered Nutritionist with the UKVRN may recommend NHS approved supplements such as folic acid.

Nutritionists who are not registered with the UKVRN may suggest supplements that are not NHS approved.

nutritionist

Nutritional therapy encompasses the use of recommendations for diet and lifestyle in order to alleviate or prevent ailments. These recommendations may include guidance on detoxification, colonic irrigation, the avoidance of ingestion or inhalation of 'toxins' or 'allergens' and the use of supplementary nutrients.

Is their title protected by law? No - anyone can call themselves a Nutrition Therapist.

What qualifications do they have? Do not have UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists or HPC recognised qualifications

Some training through the Institute of Optimum Nutrition or other informal routes

Who are they regulated and quality assured by? Voluntary regulation is possible through the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC)

How can I check? Complementary and natural healthcare council - <http://www.cnhc.org.uk/pages/index.cfm>

Where do they work? Nutritional therapists see private patients who wish consider alternative/complementary medicine.

What type of treatments do they offer? Nutritional therapists use treatments such as high dose vitamins, detox, and food avoidance for which there is little evidence.

They work on the belief that the body has underlying nutritional and biochemical imbalances that are leading to poor health including mental health problems.

They do not use the evidence in a robust fashion and advice is most often based on personal opinion or belief.

What products do they use? Nutritional therapists use commercial (non-NHS approved) dietary supplements including mega doses, and commercial (not NHS approved) allergy testing. Suggested products have to be bought.

nutrition therapist





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*Trust a dietitian
to know about nutrition*

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