

Nutrition/Dietetics

Overview

“You are what you eat.”

Scientific studies are proving that the food we eat has a significant impact on our health. Changes in diet can help prevent or control many health problems, including obesity, diabetes, and certain risk factors for cancer and heart disease.

Dietetics is the health field that focuses on the interaction between nutrition and health. Dietitians and dietetic technicians design “nutrition therapies” that help the body use the natural nutrients and properties in food to protect against disease and promote health.

The field of dietetics has a strong emphasis on public health, and a commitment to educating all Americans about the importance of making proper dietary choices. Dietitians who work in facilities preparing food strive to develop menus and recipes that are healthful, tasty and cost-effective.

Professionals in the field of dietetics often focus their efforts on specific populations, facilities or initiatives, including:

- Designing individual nutritional therapies to address specific health issues, such as overweight, diabetes or hypertension
- Developing facility-wide nutrition programs for health care, educational, correctional and other institutions
- Increasing public awareness of proper nutritional standards and habits
- Improving the accuracy and comprehension of food labels
- Ensuring the safety of our food supply
- Researching how changes in diet (such as reducing salt intake) affect health (by reducing blood pressure)
- Working with food manufacturers to improve the nutritional quality of prepared foods

Growing public interest in “taking control” of one’s health is likely to improve employment prospects for dietetics professionals who can design healthy eating programs. The growing and aging population will also increase demand for accurate nutrition information and plans.

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