

# Information Sheet

## What is a Dietitian?

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Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) have the qualifications and skills to modify diets and to treat diseases and conditions such as diabetes, overweight and obesity, cancer, heart disease, renal disease, gastro-intestinal diseases and food allergies. Evidence shows that nutrition intervention can significantly improve patient outcomes, resulting in fewer hospital admissions and readmissions, better medical outcomes and improved quality of life.

APDs have either completed a Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) accredited university degree, comprising a minimum of four years full-time training, or have successfully sat the DAA examination for overseas-training dietitians. APDs must engage in an ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) program and comply with the DAA's guidelines for best practice.

### How can a dietitian help?

Dietitians may provide advice and treatment when:

- A new diagnosis requires specific dietary modification
- An assessment of a patient's nutritional needs is required
- A patient has a poor understanding of dietary management.

### When to refer to a dietitian

Triggers for referring patients to a dietitian include:

- Significant weight change
- Failure to meet nutrition needs
- Recent poor food intake, poor appetite, or difficulty preparing or eating food
- Changes in medication
- Periodic review of medical nutrition therapy.

### Medicare Eligibility

To be eligible to provide services under Medicare, a dietitian needs to be an 'Accredited Practising Dietitian' as recognised by the DAA. Most private healthcare funds provide rebates for visits to private practice APDs.

### For further information visit

- [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)