

OPTIONS FOR ACCESSING A DIETITIAN

Free of charge unless otherwise noted.

Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC

- General nutrition, healthy eating & feeding, for adults and pediatrics
- Call 8-1-1 Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm & ask to speak with a dietitian
- No referral required



Public Health Dietitians

- Work with food security hubs, schools, community agencies/groups/networks, governments, and other health professionals
- No referral required



Home & Community Care Dietitians

- For clients receiving care in their home with complex nutrition needs
- Call the Community Access Line in your region to learn if you are eligible
- No services in Cowichan Valley except for Community Virtual Care and Health Services for Community Living (HSCL) clients
- Contact your health provider or Community Health Services case manager for a referral



Primary Care Network (PCN) Dietitians

- Individual nutrition counselling for PCN clients (all ages) and group nutrition presentations for all community members (18 years & older)
- Available in Campbell River, Comox Valley, & Westshore Communities (Sooke)



Private Practice Dietitians

- Individual nutrition counselling, group classes, corporate, foods skills, grocery store tours, workshops, media
- Fee for service, may be covered by extended health care benefits



Eating Disorders Services

- South Vancouver Island resident (all ages) services provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, provider referral required
- Cowichan Valley child & youth services are provided by the Child and Youth Mental Health team, no referral required
- Central and North Vancouver Island resident (all ages) and Cowichan Valley adult services are provided by Island Health, primary care provider referral required



Outpatient Dietitians

- Individual and group nutrition counselling for nutrition-related medical conditions, for adults and pediatrics
- Referral from health professional required



Diabetes Education Services

- Education, support, and assistance to people with pre-diabetes, type 1, type 2, or gestational diabetes (all ages)
- Self and health professional referrals accepted



Pediatric Feeding & Swallowing Clinic

- For children and youth (under age of 19) with significant feeding and oral motor challenges including inability to meet nutrition needs, transition to age-appropriate solid foods, difficulty managing liquids, feeding tubes, or swallow safety
- Self & health professional referrals accepted



Indigenous Health Dietitians

- Work with Indigenous Communities to improve nutrition and food security
- No referral required



DIETITIAN OR NUTRITIONIST: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

In BC, Dietitians are dedicated health professionals with education, training, expertise, and accountability to provide evidence-based nutrition advice.

Dietitians are the only nutrition professionals regulated by law.

Nutritionists, Holistic Nutritionists and Certified Nutritionists are not regulated in their training requirements or their practice.

	Dietitian	Holistic Nutritionist	Certified Nutritionist
Titles	In BC, the title 'Dietitian' is protected and regulated by law.	In BC, the term 'nutritionist' is not protected or regulated by law, so anyone can use it. Commonly used titles include: - Registered Holistic Nutritionist (RHN) - Certified Nutritional Practitioner (CNP) - Registered Nutritional Therapist (RNT) - Registered Nutritional Consulting Practitioner (RNCP) - Natural Nutrition Clinical Practitioner (NNCP).	
Government Regulation	Accountable to provincial regulatory body (College of Health and Care Professionals of BC) for the highest standards of education & ethics, including mandatory annual training. This is important in protecting the public.	No governmental regulation exists or is required for Registered Holistic or Certified Nutritionists. Terms such as 'certified,' 'registered,' 'specialist' or 'therapist' (and many others) are also not controlled.	
Entry-Level Training & Requirements	- University degree (4-5 years) - Plus ~1300 hours of supervised practicum in counselling, disease management, population health & food systems - Plus completion of the Canadian Dietetic Registration Examination *The only program in BC is at the University of British Columbia. Total training >2800 hours.	1 year full time course work (11 instructional months) at a private, vocational school. Total training ~632 hours.	Qualifications vary from post secondary certificates or degrees in nutrition to no formal education or training in the field.
Scope of Practice	Qualified to work in hospitals, medical clinics, long-term care, schools, communities, government offices, food industries, private practice, and other areas.	May work in naturopathic wellness clinics, schools, stores, community agencies. Can work in private practice but cannot make claims by using words such as prevent, treat, cure, or heal.	

References

- <https://www.closingthegap.ca/dietitian-vs-nutritionist-whats-the-difference/>
- csnn.ca/careers/scope-and-code (Canadian School of Natural Nutrition)
- www.unlockfood.ca/About-Dietitians/Is-there-a-difference-between-a-dietitian-and-nutritionist (Dietitians of Canada)

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