

## **Add an RD to your weight loss team**

Staying healthy involves being at a body weight that is right for you. The best way to find out if you are at a healthy weight is to talk to your doctor. If it turns out that you can benefit from weight loss then one of the most important people to help you meet your weight loss goals is a Registered Dietitian. (RD)

While many people call themselves nutrition experts, only a Registered Dietitian meets the strict National Standards required to be designated an RD. In Canada that includes a Bachelor of Science specializing in human nutrition, an accredited internship or graduate program and passing a National Examination. In addition, each province has its own College of Dietitians to which the Dietitian is accountable. Unlike the word Dietitian, terms such as nutritionist or nutrition counsellor are not regulated or protected by law. That means that the type and level of education and service can be variable.

So what do Dietitians do and how can they help you? Dietitians are food, diet and nutrition specialists. They work in a variety of areas including clinics, hospitals, private businesses, fitness centres, in the community, government, and more. Dietitians can give you safe and accurate information to help you eat healthier, manage and prevent chronic disease, manage weight, determine if you are getting the right nutrients, understand food labels and much more.

Dietitians work with some of the most challenging diet issues, ranging from obesity to issues of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes as well as general weight loss. Few doctors specialize in nutrition or have the time necessary to provide complete nutritional information so quite often refer their patients to dietitians for consultations. A Dietitian is a Medical Professional who deals with your personal dietary issues and is not there to sell pills, products or supplements.

Weight Loss is a tricky topic. Many people are unhappy with their current weight but aren't sure how to change it. A Registered Dietitian can be a valuable partner in safe and effective long term healthy weight management. A study recently published in the Annals of Internal Medicine followed the weight loss of 375 participants in a University Medical Centre Weight Loss program. The results showed that those participants who had the support of a Registered Dietitian in private and group consultations lost an average of 9% of total body weight after 6 months. This was double the weight loss results of the control group who did not attend the RD consultations.

Weight Management is about long term success. People who lose weight quickly by crash dieting or other extreme measures usually gain back all (or more) of the pounds they lost because they haven't permanently change their eating habits. Dietitians focus on long term health improvement to achieve permanent weight loss, reduce risk for disease and improve the quality of client's lives. Although the emphasis is on healthy, nutritious and whole foods, Dietitians can provide strategies to help enjoy and control usually forbidden food items to avoid the feelings of

deprivation. Often individuals get discouraged when placed on a strict or too low calorie diet. A Registered Dietitian can provide the education, tools and options one needs to empower themselves to achieve and maintain a healthy weight for life.

***Melanie Wiebe, Bsc, BAsc, RD is a Registered Dietitian who works with the Medical Weight Loss and Lifestyle Change Programs at City Centre Health and Fitness. She is available for private consultations. Call City Centre Health and Fitness 250-487-1481***

•