

# “Every Registered Dietitian (RD)/Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) is a nutritionist, but not every nutritionist is an RD or RDN”

As an RDN with a Master’s in Nutrition running my own practice, I hear a lot of confusion from clients on what nutrition advice to follow and find it important to distinguish between the range of nutrition professionals. Take the following key differences in to account when making the decision as to what your best option is for reaching your health goals!

## Registered Dietitian/ Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

### •Education:

- Requires at least an accredited bachelor's degree in nutrition
- an accredited dietetic internship requires minimum 1200 hours of varied supervised practice
- Pass the Registration exam through CDR
- At least 75 hours of continuing education every 5 years
- It is now becoming more common for dietitians to also have a Master's degree

### •Initials to look for:

- at least RD or RDN ; may include additional initials for master's degree or advanced certifications

### •Other Facts:

- Held to a strict board of ethics requiring use of evidence based practice
- Avoid recommending fad diets and rather focus on individualized needs for clients without pushing products.
  - (but will ensure a client insistent on a non traditional eating lifestyle, will be provided with evidence based advice to promote the health within that eating choice)
- Can work in a range of fields from a hospital setting to private practice to school nutrition or government settings, etc.
- Have training and experience in a wide range of disease states/medical conditions as well as healthy lifestyle changes and athletic performance (many choose to specialize in specific areas)
- Training on drug /supplement- nutrient interactions
- May be a little more expensive for counseling services due to more extensive education and expertise



## Nutritionist

### •Education:

- Can range from a passion for nutrition with no formal education to a quick online training or as much as a high level degree in nutrition without experiential training

### •Initials/Titles to look for:

- none- no certifications required in many states including Colorado and Arizona
- Board Certified Holistic Nutrition (BCHN) or Certified Nutrition Professional (CNP)- require more formal education, examination, and some experiential focused specifically on holistic nutrition (less varied/traditional nutrition provided) through NANP
- Health Coach- can have education varying from psychology to nutrition to exercise wellness and have a non nutrition specific certification. Some do have additional professional degrees
- Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS); Certified Nutrition Consultant (CNC); Certified Master Nutrition Specialist (CMNS); personal trainer "Nutritionists;" and more that require a varied level of training even as minimal as less than 15 hours of education with open book tests .

### •Other Facts:

- Most are not governed by any board of ethics
- Recommendations can sometimes be made without evidence of safety or efficacy
- Many times are trained to promote/push supplements or other popular health related products
- more likely to provide advice focused on a specific "type of diet" rather than individualized plans
- Can have their own practice or work in certain positions in goverment or school nutrition
- Most only have the education/training to provide advice for healthy lifestyle nutrition and possibly weight management- disease specific nutrition formal education is unlikely
- May cost less due to less education/training for counseling sessions; may become more expensive with recommendations of mutlipe supplements or products