




Successful Food and Nutrition Outcomes Require Teamwork

NUTRITION CONNECTION



Teamwork is key to
providing effective
person-centered
quality care

As nutrition professionals in health care it's critical that we are effective team players. Effective teams offer the potential to achieve more than any of us as individuals can attain when working alone.

Across the healthcare continuum there is an increased reliance on teams to improve clinical care and quality of life. Medical errors continue to be one of the most common causes of death in the United States, and teamwork failures (i.e. failures in communication) account for up to 70-80 percent of medical errors. Clearly there is a critical need for healthcare professionals to implement strategies for improving team-based approaches to quality care. This certainly applies to the nutrition team consisting

of the registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN), the nutrition and dietetics technician, registered (NDTR), and the certified dietary manager, certified food protection professional (CDM, CFPP).

This article provides an overview of the education, skills, and competencies of each member of the nutrition care team, along with recommendations for effective coordination and collaboration as a team. Respect for each other and for the unique knowledge and skills that each professional brings to the table with clear communication are key components. Working together, the team can successfully provide effective person-centered quality care.



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EDUCATION, SKILLS, AND COMPETENCIES OF THE NUTRITION TEAM

To function as a team, it's important to understand the education, skills, and competencies of the individual players. A brief description of the RDN, NDTR, and CDM follows, along with some pertinent information about each professional.

- **Registered dietitian nutritionist**

(RDN): An RDN is a food and nutrition expert who has met academic and professional requirements including:

- > A bachelor's degree with coursework approved by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). ACEND is the accrediting agency for education programs that prepare dietetics practitioners, and is recognized by the United States Department of Education. (Coursework typically includes food and nutrition sciences, foodservice systems management, business, economics, computer science, sociology, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, and chemistry.)
- > Completed an accredited, supervised practice program at a healthcare facility, community agency, or foodservice corporation.
- > Passed a national exam administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR).
- > Earns continuing professional education to maintain registration.

- **Nutrition and dietetics technician, registered (NDTR):**

An NDTR is a nationally-credentialed food and nutrition technical practitioner. NDTRs have met the following education criteria:

- > Completed a dietetic technician program accredited by ACEND that includes 450 hours of supervised practice experience and completed at least a two year associate's degree at a U.S. regionally accredited college or university. (Coursework typically includes fundamentals of nutrition and nutrition across the lifespan, applied food science and techniques of food preparation, foodservice systems management, chemistry, physiology, microbiology applied to food safety, human resource management, communications, and business.)

OR

- > Completed coursework in an ACEND-accredited didactic program or coordinated program in dietetics and completed at least a bachelor's degree at a U.S. regionally accredited college or university.
- > After completing the degree and dietetics coursework, passed the Registration Examination for Dietetic Technicians, a national credentialing exam administered by the CDR.
- > Earns continuing professional education to maintain registration.

NDTRs work under the supervision of an RDN when in direct patient/client nutrition care in practice areas such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, retirement centers, hospices, home healthcare programs, and research facilities conducting patient/client screens. NDTRs gather data and perform assigned tasks to assist RDNs in providing medical nutrition therapy.

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NDTRs may work independently in providing general nutrition education to healthy populations in a variety of settings.

- **Certified dietary manager, certified food protection professional (CDM, CFPP):** A CDM, CFPP has the training and experience to competently perform the responsibilities of a certified dietary manager and has satisfied the following professional requirements:

- > Met one of these five eligibility pathways for the CDM Credentialing Exam: 1) graduated from an ANFP-approved foodservice manager training program (includes 120 hours of didactic education plus 150 hours of field experience); 2) hold a two- or four-year college degree in foodservice management, nutrition, culinary arts, or hotel-restaurant management; 3) graduated from a 90-hour foodservice course curriculum and have two years of institutional foodservice management experience; 4) current and former members of the military who have graduated from an approved program and attained the grade of E-5; 5) hold an alternate two- or four-year degree or higher and have five years of foodservice management experience.
- > Passed a nationally-recognized credentialing exam offered by the Certifying Board for Dietary Managers. The exam covers five competency areas: Nutrition, Foodservice, Personnel and Communications, Sanitation and Food Safety, and Business Operations.
- > Earns continuing education (CE) to maintain certification, including CE in sanitation and food safety.

CDMs work in conjunction with RDNs to provide direct nutrition care for clients, within their Scope of Practice.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Each member of a successful nutrition team must work within their individual Scope of Practice, which refers to the range of roles, activities, and regulations within which that healthcare professional is to perform. The RDN, NDTR, and CDM must continually self-assess their skills, education, training, and knowledge, as well as their autonomy, responsibility, and accountability in the practice of nutrition and dietetics.

Resources for specific Scope of Practice information for each nutrition team member can be found in the table below.

INDIVIDUAL SCOPES OF PRACTICE

RDN: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, January 2018, Volume 118, Number 1.

Web link: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/quality-management/scope-of-practice>

NDTR: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, February 2018, Volume 118, Number 2.

Web link: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/quality-management/scope-of-practice>

CDM, CFPP: Certifying Board for Dietary Managers: CDM, CFPP Scope of Practice.

Web link: <http://www.cbdomonline.org/cdm-resources/cdm-cfpp-scope-of-practice>

TEAMWORK IS CRITICAL for effective quality nutritional care with positive outcomes. Understand the education, skills, competencies, and Scope of Practice for each team member.

COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL TEAM

Understanding the education, skills, competencies, and Scope of Practice for each team member is important. Other recommendations for a successful team include:

- Respect each other with unity of purpose. Know the mission and vision for your organization and define your desired outcomes (i.e., improved satisfaction scores for food and nutrition services, no unexpected weight loss, prevention and management of pressure injuries, budget parameters, etc.).
- Carry out your respective duties and work with others to solve problems. Trust develops in a cohesive team, increasing confidence in your team partners, knowing they will fulfill their duties (i.e., timely and accurate documentation, follow-through on respective areas, etc.).
- Bring your expertise to the table. Keep current in “best practices” (i.e., person-centered care, wound management, food and nutrition systems, food safety, etc.).
- Work together to solve problems with integrative thinking (i.e., look for all relevant factors, solve the problem as a whole and not just as a “piece,” generate innovative ideas). Incorporate with a Quality Assurance Performance Improvement (QAPI) mindset.
- Influence the team so that members do their collective best for the clients. This motivates every individual to act in the interests of the team and the desired objectives. The goal is to create a positive group dynamic. An example might be reducing the use of commercial supplements when the team is working towards use of “real food” to support improved quality of life, while also resulting in financial savings to the organization.

- Establish clear communication working toward coordinated goals. Not only does this help in overall team communication, the clients also experience greater clarity about their nutritional care and services.

CONCLUSION

Teamwork is critical for effective quality nutritional care with positive outcomes. Efficient and effective collaboration and cooperation by the nutrition team of the RDN, NDTR, and CDM, CFPP provide benefits for each healthcare professional on the team, their peers, and the clients they serve. **E**



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This Level I article assumes that the reader has entry level knowledge of the topic. The desired outcome is to ensure a foundation of basic concepts of the subject matter.

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- A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) is a food and nutrition expert who has met academic and professional requirements including:
 - Bachelor’s degree with coursework approved by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ Accreditation Council; completion of an accredited practice program at a healthcare facility, community agency, or foodservice corporation; and passing a national exam
 - Meeting continuing professional education requirements to maintain registration on an ongoing basis
 - Both A and B
- A nutrition and dietetics technician, registered (NDTR) works under the supervision of an RDN when in _____ patient/client nutrition care in practice areas such as hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes.
 - Direct
 - Local
 - International
- An NDTR may work independently in providing general nutrition education to _____ populations in a variety of settings.
 - Reimbursable
 - Healthy
 - Pediatric
- A certified dietary manager, certified food protection professional (CDM, CFPP) is an individual that
 - Has completed the requirements for taking the national credentialing exam by the Certifying Board for Dietary Managers and successfully passed the exam
 - Is meeting continuing education requirements that include CE hours in sanitation and food safety to maintain certification
 - Both A and B
- Scope of Practice refers to a range of _____ within which the healthcare professional is to practice.
 - Roles, activities, and regulations
 - 25-50 miles
 - 51-100 miles
- A successful team will incorporate
 - Respect for each other
 - A dress code
 - Nutritious snacks
- Clear communication is essential for effective teamwork and helps
 - Overall team communication
 - Improve clarity for clients about their nutritional care and services
 - Both A and B

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