

10 Reasons to Visit an RDN

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Between what you hear on TV and read in the news, eating right can seem like a real challenge. But it doesn't have to be. A registered dietitian, or RD, or registered dietitian nutritionist, or RDN, will partner with you to develop a safe and realistic eating plan that

you can stick with for the long haul. To guide and motivate you, an RD or RDN will use creative and out-of-the-box strategies to help with meal planning, grocery shopping and mindful eating.

Anyone can call themselves a nutritionist. But, only an RD or RDN has completed multiple layers of education and training established by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics. All RDs or RDNs must:

- Get a four-year degree which includes a specially designed, accredited nutrition curriculum.
- Complete an extensive supervised program of practice at a health care facility, foodservice organization or community agency.
- Pass a rigorous registration exam.

What's more, roughly half of all RDs and RDNs hold graduate degrees and many have certifications in specialized fields, such as sports, pediatric, renal, oncology or gerontological nutrition.

Do you want to lose or gain weight? Are you pregnant, looking to become pregnant or just had a child? Are you looking for ways to maintain your health in your older years? Are you an athlete looking to boost performance? These are just a few of the reasons people seek the expert, science-based advice of a RDN.

10 Common Reasons to Consult with a RDN

You Want Help Managing Diabetes, High Blood Pressure or Other Chronic Diseases

An RDN can help you understand your condition and how the foods you choose might affect it. Plus, a registered dietitian nutritionist works with you to create an eating plan that has the nutrients needed to manage your condition.

You Are Thinking of Having or Have Had Gastric Bypass Surgery

Since your stomach can only manage small servings after surgery, it's tricky to get the nutrients that your body needs. As a part of your health care team, an RDN helps you make changes to your eating plan without settling for less taste.

You Have Digestive Problems

Working closely with you and your doctor, a registered dietitian nutritionist helps fine-tune your diet. Guidance can help you make choices that do not aggravate your condition. For example, limiting fried foods, or caffeinated and carbonated drinks.

You're Pregnant, Trying to Get Pregnant, or a New Mom

Meet with an RDN to make sure you get the nutrients you need for a healthy pregnancy. And, after the baby comes, a registered dietitian nutritionist can help make sure you're getting the nutrients you need for you and your little one.

Unsure what you can eat because of celiac disease, food allergies, lactose intolerance, or another condition? It's easy to be overwhelmed by what you think you can't eat. And, that can lead to a boring diet that doesn't give your body the nutrition it needs. An RDN can teach you strategies about identifying foods to avoid and help you find substitutions to keep your diet balanced and tasty.

Your Teenager Has Issues with Food and Eating Healthfully

As part of the treatment team, RDNs counsel individuals with eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia.

You Need to Gain or Lose Weight

Fad diets may sound like the quick ticket to weight gain or loss, but they rarely work for very long. An RDN can suggest calorie sources for healthy weight gain. Or, design a personalized weight loss plan, including diet changes and physical activity — while still eating all your favorite foods.

You're Caring for an Aging Parent

An RDN can help with food or drug interactions, proper hydration, special diets for hypertension and changing taste buds as you age.

You Want Practical Lifestyle Advice

Need help sorting through the facts and fiction of nutrition headlines? Learn how to read labels at the supermarket, discover how healthy cooking can be inexpensive, learn how to dine out without ruining your eating plan and how to resist workplace temptations. When you see an RD or RDN, the last thing you'll get is one-size-fits-all diet advice. After learning about your health history, favorite foods, eating and exercise habits, an RD or RDN will help you set goals and prioritize. Follow-up visits will focus on maintenance and monitoring your progress.

You Want to Improve Your Performance in Sports

A RDN can help you set goals to achieve results — whether you're running a marathon, skiing or jogging with your dog.
