



GETTING THE RIGHT DIETARY ADVICE

Getting the right food and nutrition information is very important when it comes to looking after all aspects of your health and wellbeing. An Accredited Practising Dietitian is a university trained health professional who translates scientific nutrition information into practical advice, to help you make the right decisions about what to eat.

There are no rules governing the use of the terms 'dietitian' and 'nutritionist'. The latter term can be used by people with limited nutrition training. Also, there are many nutrition focused industries and practitioners in Australia (for example, media, pharmacy and weight loss product companies) providing general advice, often for profit, rather than specifically focusing on how to best help you with your health.

For a balanced assessment, an Accredited Practising Dietitian is preferable as they have had the training in human nutrition including substantial theory and supervised professional practice in clinical nutrition, medical therapy and food service management. Therefore in Australia, all dietitians are considered nutritionists, however, nutritionists without a dietetic qualification cannot take on the specialised role of a dietitian.

A dietitian can provide advice about:

- How to manage your health through dietary and nutritional support. This may involve you modifying your food and/or supplement intake.
- Weight loss and gain
- Nutritional needs for all age groups
- The right types and quantities of food and drinks
- Shopping for food and understanding food labels
- Food preparation and cooking skills
- Meal ideas and recipes
- How to adjust your diet for specific health concerns and conditions.

An Accredited Practising Dietitian is the national credential recognised by the Dietitians Association of Australia. You should check that your dietitian has this credential before making an appointment.

A suitable Accredited Practising Dietitian may be found by accessing the Dietitians Association of Australia website <http://daa.asn.au/for-the-public/find-an-apd/>

If you have a DVA Health Card – For All Conditions (Gold Card) the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will fund dietetic services through DVA arrangements that meet your clinical needs.

If you have a DVA Health Card – For Specific Conditions (White Card), DVA will fund dietetic services provided under DVA arrangements, if they are required because of an accepted war or service caused injury or disease.

For further information view the DVA Dietetic Services Factsheet HSV21 <http://factsheets.dva.gov.au/>

For more information contact DVA via www.dva.gov.au Phone: 133 254 or 1800 555 254 (regional Australia).

For non DVA clients, an Accredited Practising Dietitian can provide services privately, which are subsidised by Medicare and private health funds.

Natalie Thompson
DVA Dietetic Adviser