

Dietetics

Practice and Future Trends

Third Edition

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Introduction

The purpose of this book about the profession of dietetics is to present an overview of the many career directions and opportunities open to dietitians. This is a time when the profession encourages students of today and tomorrow to take advantage of many unfolding career choices to explore and find professional pathways to a fulfilling and satisfying dietetics career.

The book is about the dietetic profession—what dietitians do, where they practice, and what is required to become a professional dietitian. Educational requirements and other data about dietetic technicians are also included. This is primarily a book for students: those beginning in dietetics, those who are undecided about a career choice, or those who are nearing the completion of their education and training and are exploring further possibilities. In addition, dietitians or others considering a career change will find information that encourages exploration along new paths of opportunity. In addition to career resources, information is included about education and experience requirements as well as credentialing and continuing education. Readers will also learn about the historical development of the profession, the American Dietetic Association as the governing body, and the future outlook for the profession.

Dietitians, through their unique knowledge of both the science and art of nutrition, are the professionals taking the lead in the promotion of nutritional public health. Because of this blend of scientific knowledge and the social and cultural factors that influence what people eat, dietitians are able to use their skills to help individuals in illness and disease prevention as well as those who are healthy and active. Dietitians also interact with professionals of other disciplines that affect nutrition and are able to blend their assorted expertise for the benefit of clients. Their participation in basic research and in integrating new scientific concepts into clinical and

public or community nutrition practices adds an invaluable dimension to the dietetics profession.

Dietitians are prepared to be versatile through their education in the biologic and physical sciences, including nutrition, foods, food preparation and service, management, sociology, and psychology. This versatility of expertise of dietitians is especially critical as the international scene continues to expand, opening many opportunities in international nutrition, management, and food service.

Several changes have been made in this *Third Edition*. Strategic planning by the American Dietetic Association, newly revised education and experience requirements for membership and practice, a newly revised Code of Ethics, and updated results of membership and salary survey data have been added. Information on trends in the profession offering continually expanding opportunities for dietitians is emphasized throughout. Examples are informatics and the genetic basis of nutritional practice.

As in earlier editions, we thank the dietetic experts who contributed material to this book. Their valuable contributions are acknowledged as essential, especially the materials elucidating what dietitians do and how they practice.

We hope that students, teachers, advisors, and counselors will find the book informative and, hopefully, eye-opening regarding career choices. The authors believe this profession has much to offer students and dietitians of the future and attest that we have enjoyed satisfying and fulfilling careers in this profession. We hope that many who read this book will be inspired to become dietitians of the 21st century and will help create additional innovative career options.