

Electronic referral form

Referring to an APD is fast and easy with an electronic referral form, which can be integrated with most practice management softwares. You can access the electronic referral form by visiting the *Health Professional* section of the Dietitians Association of Australia website, daa.asn.au.

What rebates are available to patients?

Most private health funds provide rebates for visits to private practising APDs. Medicare provides rebates for visits to APDs treating chronic health conditions under a team care plan coordinated by a GP.



Finding an APD

- Check the 'Find an APD' section on the DAA website at www.daa.asn.au
- Telephone DAA's toll-free APD hotline 1800 812 942
- Check the Yellow Pages under 'Dietitian'
- Call your local public or private hospital or community health centre and ask to speak to an APD.
- Always check the qualifications of a dietitian when referring a patient for individual nutrition advice. Look for the letters APD after their name, or the APD logo.

About the Dietitians Association of Australia

DAA is the peak body for dietetic and nutrition professionals in Australia. DAA supports dietitians, and is committed to working with all sectors to improve the nutrition and health of Australians.

www.daa.asn.au

Visit the DAA website for everything you need to know about the organisation, for information on healthy eating, and to find an APD.

Recommend the *Smart Eating for You* section of the DAA website to your patients for up-to-date, practical and reliable nutrition information, healthy recipes and much more.



For further information

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Your Accredited Practising Dietitian

How your practice can benefit from an Accredited Practising Dietitian



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Accredited Practising Dietitians: Your nutrition and dietetics partners

Nutrition intervention can improve patient outcomes - being associated with fewer hospital admissions and readmissions, better medical outcomes and improved quality of life. Adding a dietitian to the health care team can really pay off.

Dietitians are experts in food and nutrition. They translate scientific nutrition information into personalised, practical advice. The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) recommends looking for the Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) credential when choosing a dietitian.



What is an Accredited Practising Dietitian?

All APDs have either graduated from a DAA accredited dietetics program in Australia or have qualified overseas and passed DAA's examinations in dietetics.

They undertake ongoing professional development, comply with DAA's guidelines for evidence-based practice, and commit to uphold DAA's Code of Professional Conduct and Statement of Ethical Practice. The APD Program is the national credentialing system for dietitians, and is administered by DAA.

APDs work in private practice, community health centres, aged-care facilities and hospitals. APDs see individual clients and may run group nutrition education sessions.

How can an APD help improve patient outcomes?

APDs can advise your patients on the specific nutritional management of many conditions, such as:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Overweight and obesity
- Food allergy and intolerance
- Eating disorders
- Physical and mental disabilities.

A consultation with an APD generally includes a thorough diet and lifestyle assessment, plus nutritional education and counselling – or Medical Nutrition Therapy. Progress is monitored at regular follow-up consultations, as needed. APDs communicate with other members of the health care team regarding patient progress and outcomes.

What other services do APDs provide?

As well as Medical Nutrition Therapy, APDs can provide a range of services, including:

- Taking part in care planning and case conferences
- Educating carers and families
- Developing patient education resources
- Developing menu plans
- Collaborating on health promotion activities
- Providing continuing professional development for health professionals
- Collaborating on research activities.

When should you refer to an APD?

Some people perceive dietitians as only helpful for patients wanting to lose weight. Assisting with weight loss is, however, only one area of a dietitian's broad expertise.

A referral may be helpful for a patient who:

- Has a new diagnosis requiring specific dietary modification, for example, coeliac disease
- Is failing to meet their nutrition needs such as in anaemia or osteoporosis
- Has had a significant unintentional weight change – either weight loss or gain
- Has a recent poor food intake, poor appetite, dysphagia, or difficulty preparing or eating food, which can occur with conditions such as multiple sclerosis, motor neuron disease and Parkinson's disease
- Experiences a deterioration of symptoms or a change in care needs
- Is prescribed a medication that may affect dietary intake such as psychotropic medications or chemotherapy
- Requires alternative feeding such as nasogastric or PEG feeding
- Needs a better understanding of their dietary management
- Needs a periodic dietary review, such as post-bariatric surgery

For a comprehensive list of indications for referral, visit the *Health Professional* section of the Dietitians Association of Australia website, daa.asn.au and download the resource "Improving Patient Outcomes through Medical Nutrition Therapy".