

Source: Job Descriptions: Models for the Dietetics Profession, 2nd edition, 2008. American Dietetic Association, ISBN: 978-0-88091-420-8.

Sports Dietitian Job Description

The following is a sample job description for a sports dietitian.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Sports Dietitian provides individual and group/team nutrition counseling and education to enhance the performance of competitive and recreational athletes, on-site and during travel. Primary responsibilities include counseling individuals and groups on daily nutrition for performance and health; translating the latest scientific evidence into practical sports nutrition recommendations; tracking and documenting outcomes of nutrition services, serving as a food and nutrition resource for coaches, trainers, and parents; providing sports nutrition education for health/wellness programs, athletic teams, and community groups; and maintaining professional competency and skills required for professional practice.

PRIMARY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual Nutrition Counseling

- Assesses and analyzes dietary practices, body composition, and energy balance (intake and expenditure) of athletes in the context of athletic performance and health.
- Counsels athletes on optimal nutrition for exercise training (match nutrition to training phases and goals), competition, recovery from exercise, weight management, hydration, immunity, disordered eating, travel, and supplementation.
- Counsels athletes on achieving and maintaining a level of body mass, body fat, and muscle mass that is consistent with good health and good performance.
- Provides personalized meal and snack plans to promote achieving short- and long-term goals for athletic performance and good health.
- Develops and counsels in hydration protocols.
- Addresses nutritional challenges to performance, such as food allergies, bone mineral disturbances, gastrointestinal disturbances, iron depletion, and iron-deficiency anemia.
- Provides medical nutrition therapy, as needed, to help manage or treat medical conditions.
- Counsels athletes on optimal nutrition for recovery from illness or injury.
- Coordinates nutritional care as a member of multidisciplinary sports medical/sports science teams.

- Provides liaison with in- and out-patient programs for conditions such as disordered eating.
- Evaluates nutritional supplements, including herbal supplements, for legality, safety, quality, and efficacy; monitors use of appropriate supplementation.
- Collaborates with the individual's family, physician, coach, and other health professionals, as appropriate.
- Develops resources to support educational efforts.
- Educates in food selection (grocery store tours, food storage) and food preparation (cooking classes).
- Documents nutrition services provided and evaluates the effectiveness of nutrition strategies towards meeting desired outcomes using the Nutrition Care Process.
- Educates and mentors dietetic interns and others as appropriate.
- Supervises DTRs, student workers, and employees.
- Develops and oversees nutrition policies and procedures.

Food Service and Menu Development

- Coordinates/manages quantity food production and distribution such as developing and managing training table menus and catering.
- Coordinates nutrition for domestic and/or international travel, for example, catering, hotels, airlines, competition, for individuals and teams.
- Manages budgets for purchasing and distribution of nutritional supplements.
- Develops and delivers nutrition education for food service personnel.

Nutrition Education for Teams, Groups, or Wellness Programs

- Develops and delivers nutrition education presentations, demonstrations, or events on various topics related to nutrition for performance.
- Plans menus for training table and team travel.
- Recommends appropriate pre-, during, and post-exercise fluids and snacks for individual training, team practice, and competition.
- Provides individual nutrition counseling as needed.

- Serves as a nutrition resource for coaches, teachers, trainers, food service personnel, and parents.

Professional Development

- Maintains dietetic registration and continuing education requirements.
- Develops and implements an individualized portfolio plan for professional growth and development including participation in professional organizations and activities, workshops, seminars, and development programs.
- Stays abreast of current food, nutrition, and health issues and research related to sports nutrition.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

Education/Experience: Bachelor's degree in clinical nutrition, food and nutrition, or related area, granted from a U.S. regionally accredited college or university. Master's degree in nutrition or exercise physiology preferred. Completion of a didactic program in dietetics and supervised practice program approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) of the American Dietetic Association. Minimum of 2 years experience in nutrition counseling, preferably with emphasis on sports nutrition.

Certification/License: Registered Dietitian with active registration by the Commission on Dietetic Registration of the American Dietetic Association; Certification/Licensure as required by state of practice. Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) preferred.

Skills/Abilities:

- Excellent communication, presentation, and counseling skills.
- Ability to accurately measure height, and body weight.
- Ability to accurately assess body composition (body mass, body fat, and muscle mass).
- Ability to accurately assess and evaluate energy balance.
- Knowledge of eating disorder/disordered eating signs and symptoms.
- Comprehensive knowledge and application of medical nutrition therapy, including interviewing and education techniques.
- Self-motivation and ability to work independently.
- Excellent time management, organizational, and record-keeping skills.

- Knowledge of complementary medicine, ergogenic aids, and nutritional supplements, including herbal supplements.
- Competence with nutrient analysis, word processing, and presentation software.
- Compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
- Knowledge of rules and regulations of athletic governing bodies: e.g., National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), regarding banned drugs and restricted substances.
- Knowledge of measurements of resting metabolic rate, energy expenditure, VO₂max, and lactate threshold.
- Knowledge of food service quality and safety procedures.

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