

## **EFAD ESDN Diabetes Statement Paper on the Role of the Dietitian in the Prevention and Management of Gestational and Type 2 Diabetes**

Dietitians, as members of integrated multidisciplinary teams, have a central role to play in supporting both the prevention and management of diabetes<sup>1, 2</sup>. Dietary and lifestyle modification are considered the cornerstones of effective diabetes prevention and self-management. Dietitians are uniquely qualified to translate the science of nutrition and apply it to nutrition counseling, promoting healthy nutrition in diabetes, and to public health initiatives, reducing the burden of preventable disease through good nutrition.

### **The dietitians' roles**

Dietitians play varied roles within diabetes teams. Dietitians are highly skilled educators and lifestyle coaches; supporting and empowering individuals with diabetes to make healthy food choices, lead an active lifestyle and meet their personal and medical, short and long term goals<sup>2</sup>. Dietitians work as trained diabetes educators within diabetes self-management-education programs. They provide individualized therapy and counseling related to nutrition in both one-to-one and group-based settings with patients, taking into account personal and cultural beliefs, preferences, lifestyle and the willingness and ability of the person to change<sup>2</sup>. Dietitians working in diabetes also play key roles advising on overweight and obesity management, encouraging increased activity, interpreting glucose self-monitoring records and advising on how best to integrate medications management with the patients' diet and lifestyle<sup>3</sup>. Maintaining or improving quality of life is a core patient-centered outcome in all dietetic interventions.

### **The dietitian and gestational diabetes**

The role of the dietitian in the management of gestational diabetes is particularly important<sup>4</sup> given that the prescription of dietary treatment can help to normalize blood glucose levels, prevent and minimize complications in pregnancy and during delivery, and support the normal development of the fetus.

### **The dietitian and type 2 diabetes**

Diabetes interventions involving dietitians have proven efficacy for improving a range of outcomes in type 2 diabetes. Group education and care, delivered by trained dietitians, is associated with significantly lower HbA1c, decreased insulin resistance and a better quality of life than those delivered by a medically and pedagogically qualified team<sup>5</sup>. In sub-optimally controlled type 2 diabetes despite optimised drug treatment, a dietitian-led intervention was shown to significantly improve glycaemic control, weight and waist circumference and led to a significant decrease in saturated fat intake<sup>6</sup>. There is also evidence that dietary interventions involving dietitians are effective in reducing progression to type 2 diabetes in pre-diabetes (58% reduced risk of developing type 2 diabetes with an intensive lifestyle intervention). Within these interventions, dietitians work as lifestyle coaches as well as case managers and active researchers<sup>2</sup>. Most importantly, dietetic interventions to prevent diabetes are proven to be cost effective<sup>7</sup>.

### **References**

1. Tuomilehto J, Schwarz P, Lindström J. Long-Term Benefits From Lifestyle Interventions for Type 2 Diabetes Prevention. *Diabetes Care*. May 1, 2011;34(Supplement 2):S210-S214.
2. Delahanty LM. Research charting a course for evidence-based clinical dietetic practice in diabetes. *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*. 2010;23(4):360-370.
3. Pastors JG, Warshaw H, Daly A, Franz M, Kulkarni K. The Evidence for the Effectiveness of Medical Nutrition Therapy in Diabetes Management. *Diabetes Care*. March 2002;25(3):608-613.
4. Reader D, Splett P, Gunderson EP. Impact of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus Nutrition Practice Guidelines Implemented by Registered Dietitians on Pregnancy Outcomes. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2006;106(9):1426-1433.
5. Trento M, Basile M, Borgo E, et al. A randomised controlled clinical trial of nurse-, dietitian- and pedagogist-led Group Care for the management of Type 2 diabetes. *J Endocrinol Invest*. Nov 2008;31(11):1038-1042.
6. Coppell KJ, Kataoka M, Williams SM, Chisholm AW, Vorgers SM, Mann JI. Nutritional intervention in patients with type 2 diabetes who are hyperglycaemic despite optimised drug treatment - Lifestyle Over and Above Drugs in Diabetes (LOADD) study: randomised controlled trial. *BMJ*. 2010;341.





7. Wylie-Rosett J, Herman WH, Goldberg RB. Lifestyle intervention to prevent diabetes: intensive and cost effective. *Curr Opin Lipidol*. Feb 2006;17(1):37-44.

## THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF THE ASSOCIATIONS OF DIETITIANS (EFAD)

EFAD was established in 1978 with aims to:

- Promote the development of the dietetic profession
- Develop dietetics on a scientific and professional level in the common interest of the member associations
- Facilitate communication between national dietetic associations and other organisations - professional, educational, and governmental
- Encourage a better nutrition situation for the population of the member countries of Europe.

### EFAD's ambitions:

- Realise the contribution that dietitians can make to the improvement of nutritional health in Europe.
- Support the role of all National Dietetic Associations to contribute to the sustainability of economic and social health through influencing decision-makers both locally and in Europe.
- Embed best quality and evidenced-based dietetic practice in Europe through collaboration and partnership
- Promote education and lifelong learning in order to raise and maintain European dietetic standards

**Membership of EFAD** is open to National Associations of Dietitians from any European Country. EFAD currently has 33 member associations, representing over 30,000 dietitians in 26 European countries.

### Definition of a Dietitian

A dietitian is a person with a qualification in Nutrition & Dietetics recognised by a national authority. The dietitian applies the science of nutrition to the feeding and education of groups of people and individuals in both health and disease.

For further information please visit the web site: [www.efad.org](http://www.efad.org) or contact [secretariat@efad.org](mailto:secretariat@efad.org)

