

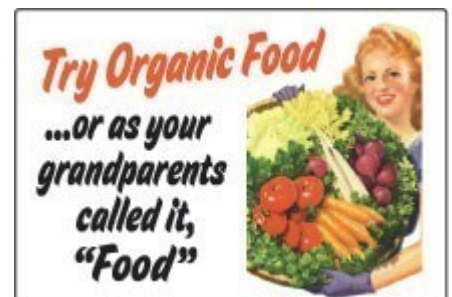
IS A NUTRITIONIST THE SAME THING AS A DIETITIAN?

This is a question I get asked very, VERY often. My usual brilliant response is:

“No...Yes.....Not exactly.....but sort of.”

Unfortunately, much as I'd like the questioner to be satisfied with that answer, no such luck. So then I have to get into this whole explanation that is pretty boring (don't take my word for it, read on!). So here it is, written down, and from now on should anyone ever ask me this question again, I'm going to direct them to this page and save myself the time and the glazed-over look that inevitably follows this explanation:

First off, let me just inform anyone who may be reading this that I live in Canada and therefore I am referring to the differences between Nutritionists and Dietitians here in this country. This information is based on my own observations by speaking to a number of people in both fields and may be similar in the U.S. or other countries but don't quote me on that (or hurl insults at me for that matter)....Also, being a Nutritionist, I may be a teeny tiny bit biased, hey I'm only human. :-\$



Nutritionists and Dietitians generally have the same number of years of education, studying the best way to treat and prevent diseases through diet, supplements and a healthier lifestyle. However, Nutritionists advocate a more holistic approach. For an inexplicable reason, the word “holistic” freaks some people out and makes them think we're chanting stuff and waving crystals. But I assure you, it simply means we view the individual as a whole, (holistic, get it?) rather than the ailment the person is presenting to us. Nutritionists recommend the use of supplements, whole (there's that word again!), unprocessed, preferably organic, foods, a healthier lifestyle including exercise, herbal medicine and other natural therapies if needed, as well as avoidance of toxins. In this way we try to get the body back to its natural state of health. We also like to avoid taking pharmaceutical drugs when possible (Relax, I said when possible!) and are therefore not well liked by many medical professionals. We are covered by a few private insurance companies who recognize our expertise, however we are lucky to have organizations such as the International Organization for Nutritional Consultants (www.ionc.org). The IONC works on our behalf to increase

insurance coverage for us as well as to make sure Nutritionists have a certain amount of upgrading education on an annual basis due to the ever-evolving research in this field.

On the other hand, the majority of Dietitians are not really that concerned with certain chemicals or preservatives in our foods and tend to stick with the typical food guide pyramid as a guideline, with specific medically-approved diet protocols and vitamin supplements for different ailments, regardless of the individual. I'm not saying that these diet protocols don't work, many of them do. In fact some are quite similar to what a Nutritionist would recommend. It is simply a more medical approach; they are generally not as knowledgeable in herbal medicine or homeopathic remedies and therefore utilize western medicine as an adjunct to diet instead. They are government approved and regulated because of this and covered by more private medical insurance companies than Nutritionists (shocking, I know). Therefore, you are much more likely to find a Dietitian in a hospital setting or medical building and a Nutritionist in private practice or alternative wellness centers. (Of course, some Dietitians see the light after a few years in practice and come over to the holistic side!)

The best way I know how to sum it up is as follows: Dietitians are to western medical doctors (MDs) what Nutritionists are to Naturopathic Doctors (NDs). Now, if you don't know what a Naturopathic doctor is (or you think its the same thing as a Homeopathic Doctor—it's not, by the way), you'll have to visit my blog another day and find out. ☐
