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Opinion

Nutrition Dietetics Overview

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The food we eat has a considerable impact on our health, according to a number of scientific studies. Changes in diet can help prevent or control many health problems, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease widely known as metabolic syndrome and certain risk factors for cancer.

Dietetics is the science of how food and nutrition affects human health. The field of dietetics has a strong emphasis on public health and a commitment to educating people about the importance of making proper dietary choices.

Dietitian nutritionists use nutrition and food science to help people improve their health. They work with medical persons to provide health care, consultation and general nutrition education to patients. From creating healthier diets to preparing better tasting foods to gaining greater understanding of disease and increased food safety they study the molecular and cellular levels of food, helping them to truly appreciate the building blocks of food and their impacts on consumers.

An overview of Hospital Dietitian's Job Profile:

- Overall supervision of cooking and distribution of patients' food.
- Designing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Responsible for setting up Dietary department including establishing protocols, processes and documentation.
- Based on the instruction of the Medical Officer in-charge of a case requiring restricted/ specialized/ increased diet, working out the permissible quantities of ingredients of ration articles like atta, sugar, milk, salt and so on to make the total prescribed calories and salt and fluid required and for necessary restriction/ increase in carbohydrates, fat, protein and other item of food to be given per day to the patient.
    - Dietary councelling as appropriate that included Cardiac, Diabetes, Renal, GI disorders etc. as per consultant referral.
    - Planning and modification of diet of each patient on a daily basis (monitoring total food and fluid intake of patients). Formulation of different combinations of Ryle's Tube feed.
- Prepare alternate menus based on the quantities of ration work out as per above.
- Keep a close liaison with the Diet store in-charge to find out what items of rations are likely to be made available and, if necessary, amend the menus suitably and requirement of any particular patient.
- Visit all the wards frequently and checkup the food distribution and enquires from the patients about their complains or any suggestions regarding their diets.
    - Outpatient department: OPD
    - In patient department: IPD (Medical ICU, Surgical ICU, Labour room and Medicine wards).
- Visiting the patient, checking the patient history, preferences and perform nutrition assessment. Accordingly, preparation of the diet summaries/ patient meal cards and handing over to Diet store in-charge for the timely service of all meals.
- Make out of correct diets and menus for patients discharged from the hospital after treatment and also for patients attending the out patients department.
- Arrange local purchase of special equipment in the Central kitchen, its maintenance and repairs.
- Formulating patient diet menu periodically.
- Maintaining records of patients and arrange follow-up as needed.
- Food tasting and evaluation for food safety of admitted patients.
- Conducting Hygiene Inspections of food handlers on regular intervals.
- Any other job related to hospital dietary services.

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