



Ethical Considerations for Dietitians during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dietitians have a professional responsibility to provide appropriate care to clients while adhering to established guidelines and protocols to minimize the risk of transmission. The following outlines expectations of practice during an emergency response:

1. Practice within the employer's scope of employment and your individual scope of competence. Inform your employer of competency limits if called upon to practice in areas where the required skills are beyond your scope of competence. Operational needs may require a re-assignment to an area of practice outside of your current scope of competence. Upon re-assignment, identify your competency limits and collaborate with the employer to update and acquire the necessary skills.
2. Adhere to all guidelines and protocols to reduce their risk of exposure when providing patient care.
3. Personal situations may be complicated by circumstances precipitated by the virus. You or a family member may become symptomatic or infected, or you may have child/elder care responsibilities. If you may be infected, inform your employer immediately that you are unavailable for work and are in self-isolation for the defined time period as per governmental/organizational recommendations. If you have child or elder care issues, inform your employer immediately that you have home responsibilities that currently prevent you from working. You should make reasonable efforts to source alternate care arrangements, if possible.
4. Ensure responsible use of social media. Be supportive of the federal and provincial health messaging the public is receiving. Communications must be transparent, objective, accurate and evidence based. Personal opinions may be interpreted as professional comments by the viewing audience. Do not use social media platforms to post about or comment on anything heard or seen about any patient, patient family member(s), or circumstance.
5. Maintain the boundaries of patient confidentiality and follow the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) and employment policies. Any information gained from employment is only to be used in the course of performing duties. Information must not be shared with family, friends or members of the community.
6. Dietitians stay informed of current information related to COVID-19 and expectations related to practice and NSDA registration.