

## **CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE PROFESSION OF DIETETICS**

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The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and its Commission on Dietetic Registration have adopted a voluntary, enforceable code of ethics. This code, entitled the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics, challenges all members, registered dietitians, and dietetic technicians, registered, to uphold ethical principles. The enforcement process for the Code of Ethics establishes a fair system to deal with complaints about members and credentialed practitioners from peers or the public.

The first code of ethics was adopted by the House of Delegates in October 1982; enforcement began in 1985. The code applied to members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics only. A second code was adopted by the House of Delegates in October 1987 and applied to all members and Commission on Dietetic Registration credentialed practitioners. A third revision of the code was adopted by the House of Delegates on October 18, 1998, and enforced as of June 1, 1999, for all members and Commission on Dietetic Registration credentialed practitioners. The current Code of Ethics was approved on June 2, 2009, by the Academy Board of Directors, House of Delegates, and the Commission on Dietetic Registration.

The Ethics Committee is responsible for reviewing, promoting, and enforcing the Code. The Committee also educates members, credentialed practitioners, students, and the public about the ethical principles contained in the Code. Support of the Code of Ethics by members and credentialed practitioners is vital to guiding the profession's actions and to strengthening its credibility.

### **PREAMBLE**

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and its credentialing agency, the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), believe it is in the best interest of the profession and the public it serves to have a Code of Ethics in place that provides guidance to dietetics practitioners in their professional practice and conduct. Dietetics practitioners have voluntarily adopted this Code of Ethics to reflect the values (Figure) and ethical principles guiding the dietetics profession and to set forth commitments and obligations of the dietetics practitioner to the public, clients, the profession, colleagues, and other professionals.

The Code of Ethics applies to the following practitioners:

- a) In its entirety to members of the Academy who are Registered Dietitians (RDs) or Dietetic Technicians, Registered (DTRs);
- b) Except for sections dealing solely with the credential, to all members of the Academy who are not RDs or DTRs; and
- c) Except for aspects dealing solely with membership, to all RDs and DTRs who are not members of the Academy.

All individuals to whom the Code applies are referred to as "dietetics practitioners," and all such individuals who are RDs and DTRs shall be known as "credentialed practitioners." By accepting membership in the Academy and/or accepting and maintaining CDR credentials, all members of the Academy and credentialed dietetics practitioners agree to abide by the Code.

1. The dietetics practitioner conducts himself/herself with honesty, integrity, and fairness.
2. The dietetics practitioner supports and promotes high standards of professional practice. The dietetics practitioner accepts the obligation to protect clients, the public, and the profession by upholding the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics and by reporting perceived violations of the Code through the processes established by the Academy and its credentialing agency, CDR.
3. The dietetics practitioner considers the health, safety, and welfare of the public at all times.
4. The dietetics practitioner will report inappropriate behavior or treatment of a client by another dietetics practitioner or other professionals.
  - a. The dietetics practitioner complies with all laws and regulations applicable or related to the profession or to the practitioner's ethical obligations as described in this Code.
  - b. The dietetics practitioner must not be convicted of a crime under the laws of the United States, whether a felony or a misdemeanor, an essential element of which is dishonesty.
  - c. The dietetics practitioner must not be disciplined by a state for conduct that would violate one or more of these principles.
  - d. The dietetics practitioner must not commit an act of misfeasance or malfeasance that is directly related to the practice of the profession as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction, a licensing board, or an agency of a governmental body.
5. The dietetics practitioner provides professional services with objectivity and with respect for the unique needs and values of individuals.
  - a. The dietetics practitioner does not, in professional practice, discriminate against others on the basis of race, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, gender, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, economic status, or any other legally protected category.
  - b. The dietetics practitioner provides services in a manner that is sensitive to cultural differences.
  - c. The dietetics practitioner does not engage in sexual harassment in connection with professional practice.
6. The dietetics practitioner does not engage in false or misleading practices or communications.
  - a. The dietetics practitioner does not engage in false or deceptive advertising of his or her services.
  - b. The dietetics practitioner promotes or endorses specific goods or products only in a manner that is not false and misleading.
  - c. The dietetics practitioner provides accurate and truthful information in communicating with the public.
7. The dietetics practitioner withdraws from professional practice when unable to fulfill his or her professional duties and responsibilities to clients and others.
  - a. The dietetics practitioner withdraws from practice when he/ she has engaged in abuse of a substance such that it could affect his or her practice.
  - b. The dietetics practitioner ceases practice when he or she has been adjudged by a court to be mentally incompetent.
  - c. The dietetics practitioner will not engage in practice when he or she has a condition that

substantially impairs his or her ability to provide effective service to others.

8. The dietetics practitioner recognizes and exercises professional judgment within the limits of his or her qualifications and collaborates with others, seeks counsel, or makes referrals as appropriate.
9. The dietetics practitioner treats clients and patients with respect and consideration.
  - a. The dietetics practitioner provides sufficient information to enable clients and others to make their own informed decisions.
  - b. The dietetics practitioner respects the client's right to make decisions regarding the recommended plan of care, including consent, modification, or refusal.
10. The dietetics practitioner protects confidential information and makes full disclosure about any limitations on his or her ability to guarantee full confidentiality.
11. The dietetics practitioner, in dealing with and providing services to clients and others, complies with the same principles set forth above in "Responsibilities to the Public" (Principles #3-7).
12. The dietetics practitioner practices dietetics based on evidence-based principles and current information.
13. The dietetics practitioner presents reliable and substantiated information and interprets controversial information without personal bias, recognizing that legitimate differences of opinion exist.
14. The dietetics practitioner assumes a life-long responsibility and accountability for personal competence in practice, consistent with accepted professional standards, continually striving to increase professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice.
15. The dietetics practitioner is alert to the occurrence of a real or potential conflict of interest and takes appropriate action whenever a conflict arises.
  - a. The dietetics practitioner makes full disclosure of any real or perceived conflict of interest.
  - b. When a conflict of interest cannot be resolved by disclosure, the dietetics practitioner takes such other action as may be necessary to eliminate the conflict, including recusal from an office, position, or practice situation.
16. The dietetics practitioner permits the use of his or her name for the purpose of certifying that dietetics services have been rendered only if he or she has provided or supervised the provision of those services.
17. The dietetics practitioner accurately presents professional qualifications and credentials.
  - a. The dietetics practitioner, in seeking, maintaining, and using credentials provided by CDR, provides accurate information and complies with all requirements imposed by CDR. The dietetics practitioner uses CDR-awarded credentials ("RD" or "Registered Dietitian"; "DTR" or "Dietetic Technician, Registered"; "CS" or "Certified Specialist"; and "FADA" or "Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics") only when the credential is current and authorized by CDR.
  - b. The dietetics practitioner does not aid any other person in violating any CDR requirements, or in representing himself or herself as CDR-credentialed when he or she is not.

18. The dietetics practitioner does not invite, accept, or offer gifts, monetary incentives, or other considerations that affect or reasonably give an appearance of affecting his/her professional judgment.
19. The dietetics practitioner demonstrates respect for the values, rights, knowledge, and skills of colleagues and other professionals.
  - a. The dietetics practitioner does not engage in dishonest, misleading, or inappropriate business practices that demonstrate a disregard for the rights or interests of others.
  - b. The dietetics practitioner provides objective evaluations of performance for employees and coworkers, candidates for employment, students, professional association memberships, awards, or scholarships, making all reasonable efforts to avoid bias in the professional evaluation of others.

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