

The Role of Registered Dietitians in Public Health

Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) Registered Dietitians (RDs) help build healthy public policy and create supportive environments to help prevent chronic disease and support the health of residents in London and Middlesex County.

Policy and program examples:

- RDs advocate for increased social assistance rates
- RDs advocate for affordable housing
- RDs assist with the development of healthier workplace and school nutrition environments
- RDs facilitate *Smart Start for Babies* (prenatal nutrition program)
- RDs promote *NutriSTEP*® Screening of children 18 months to 5 years
- RDs offer food literacy programming for at-risk individuals and families
- RDs offer *Let's Get Cookin'* (training program for school volunteers)
- RDs distribute and promote *Harvest Bucks* (vegetable and fruit voucher program)

*"... healthy public policy and community-wide programs facilitating healthier individual choices are more effective in reducing the prevalence of modifiable risk factors [for cancer prevention] at a population level than trying to change behaviours one person at a time."*¹

For evidence-based nutrition information, community members may go to:

- **MLHU website:** www.healthunit.com/in-our-community
 - Listing of Registered Dietitian services in London and Middlesex County
 - Private practice dietitians (fee for service)
 - Other community dietitians (universal programs, for specific needs and/or for registered clients)
- **MLHU website:** www.healthunit.com/food-community-resources
 - Community gardens
 - Emergency meal calendar
 - Healthy eating apps
- **MLHU website:** www.healthunit.com/food-and-healthy-eating
 - General nutrition information
- **Dietitians of Canada:** www.dietitians.ca
 - Healthy eating resources and pdf handouts
- **EatRight Ontario:** www.eatrightontario.ca
 - Question and answer service, translation in over 100 languages available
 - Order free promotional materials

Note: MLHU Dietitians do not provide individual counselling services.

¹ Cancer Care Ontario. 2015 Prevention System Quality Index: an inaugural report evaluation Ontario's efforts in cancer prevention. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2015; p3.