



Dietitians NZ

Ngā Pukenga Kai Ora o Aotearoa



FRIDAY 5TH APRIL 2024

MEDIA RELEASE

DIETITIANS CELEBRATE DIETITIAN WEEK HIGHLIGHTING INTEGRITY AND HIGH STANDARD OF PRACTICE IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Dietitians Week April 8-14, 2024

#dietitiansfuelyourhealth

Dietitians New Zealand Ngā Pukenga Ka Ora o Aotearoa is proud to announce the celebration of Dietitians Week, taking place from April 8th to 14th, 2024. This year, we are honored to join hands with our Australian dietetic colleagues in commemorating this significant event. The theme for New Zealand in 2024 is 'Dietitians Fuel Your Health', highlighting the crucial role of dietitians in promoting health and wellbeing.

However, amidst the celebrations, it is imperative to address certain misconceptions perpetuated in recent media coverage. The article "[As obesity rises, food marketers and dietitians push 'anti-diet'](#)," originally published by the Washington Post and later republished by Stuff, raises concerns regarding the portrayal of dietitians' practices in New Zealand. Regrettably, the journalist failed to engage with Dietitians New Zealand to validate the accuracy of the claims made in the article, which are not an accurate reflection of how dietitians operate in New Zealand.

All New Zealand Registered Dietitians must adhere to a strict [code of ethics](#), as part of the annual registration and practicing requirements. Principle 5 from within the Code of Ethics is particularly pertinent and reads; "Dietitians *advertise products, brands or services, only in a manner that protects and supports the health and wellbeing of the New Zealand public, whilst also upholding the integrity of the profession*". Breaches of the code of ethics are subject to disciplinary action by the Dietitians Board, underscoring the seriousness with which such matters are treated.

Dietitians New Zealand ceased all corporate sponsorship relationships in 2018, reflecting our commitment to ethical practice. We are currently exploring avenues for establishing ethical relationships with food industry bodies to support our broader health promotion efforts. As an Incorporated Society, the Dietitians New Zealand annual reports provide transparent insights into our sponsorship and funding relationships.

Contrary to misconceptions, the concept of a "non-diet" or "Health at Every Size (HAES) approach has been around within the field of dietetics since the 1960s. It also continues to be an area of active ongoing clinical research into the health outcomes from treatment. However, not all dietitians practice the non-diet approach for body weight management and many dietitians work outside of this field. For those dietitians working alongside clients with weight concerns, their treatment approaches are tailored to individual patient needs and experiences.

People with a higher body weight can experience weight bias and stigma, which can lead to worsening health outcomes. Evidence indicates that the pursuit of intentional weight loss through lifestyle modifications will reliably result in short-term success. However, this is unsustainable in the long term - with strong evidence to show that most weight is re-gained within a 2-year period. Given the complexity of the factors affecting body weight, there is a pressing need for continued research into this area, alongside increased funding to access dietitians, who can provide evidence-based treatments to maximise health outcomes.

For those seeking further information about dietitians or wanting to know where you can find a local dietitian, we invite you visit our website at www.dietitians.org.nz.

References:

- Chavkin, S Gilbert C, Tsui A, O'Connor A (2024) [As obesity rises, food marketers and dietitians push 'anti-diet](#) in Stuff 4 April 2024, reprinted from The Washington Post 3 April 2024
- Dietitians Board 2017 [Code of ethics](#) and conduct for Dietitians

Ends:

Released by Dietitians New Zealand.

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About Dietitians New Zealand

Originally established in 1943 as the New Zealand Dietetic Association, Dietitians New Zealand | Ngā Pukenga Kai Ora o Aotearoa is New Zealand's professional association for registered dietitians.

Over the past 80 years the association has continued to grow and is now the peak body of dietetic and nutrition professionals, providing strategic leadership in food and nutrition through empowerment, advocacy, education and communication, and today represents almost 600 members.

Unique Features About Dietitians in New Zealand

Dietitians work in partnership with individuals, whānau, communities and populations, in states of health and disease, to support optimal health and well-being.

Dietitians use their dietetic knowledge, skills, and judgement in a variety of contexts, which includes promoting and protecting public health, directing and delivering medical nutrition therapy services, and managing food and health systems. They may perform a variety of functions, including policy development, leadership, management, research, education, and communication roles. Dietitians with a prescribing endorsement can prescribe nutrition-related medicines.