

This document provides some important considerations for RDs when setting up a private practice:

1. Scope of Practice

RDs have a legal duty to provide safe, ethical and competent dietetic services to clients. An important aspect of professionalism is for RDs to practice within the dietetic scope of practice and know the limits of what is within your personal competence and scope of practice. If you feel a client needs other health care services that are beyond your ability or dietetic scope, you must refer your client to another RD or health professional/service, accordingly.

If you are considering taking on a particular task in your dietetic practice, you can use the [RD Role & Task Decision Framework](#) for guidance. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is the task within the dietetic scope of practice or reasonably related to it?
2. Are there any legal barriers?
3. Do RDs have the appropriate skills and competence to perform the task? If not, how can they become competent?
4. Who is the most appropriate person to perform the task?

2. Conflict of Interest

a) Review chapter 9 of the [Jurisprudence Handbook for Dietitians in Ontario](#) to make sure you or your practice will not be in any conflict or will not be perceived to be in conflict in any way.

b) Will you be selling products or promoting services that you may benefit from? Promoting a product or service for personal financial benefit could be a conflict of interest. Refer to the following résumé newsletter articles:

[Standards and Guidelines for Professional Practice: Conflict of Interest](#) (2017)

[Conflict of Interest and Dietetic Practice e-learning module](#) (2016)
[Conflict of Interest in Dietetic Practice - How to Handle Competing Interests](#) (Winter 2015, p. 5)
[Conflict of Interest & RD Practice](#) (Winter 2009, p. 4)

3. Boundary Crossings

The RD-client therapeutic relationship depends on clearly defined professional boundaries to maintain the mutual trust, integrity and respect essential for quality nutrition care. To ensure you set and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with your clients, refer to the College's [Boundary Guidelines for Professional Therapeutic RD-Client Relationships](#) (2017).

4. Advertising

Will you be advertising your services? The College encourages RDs to advertise their services and do it in an honest and client-centred manner. Refer to the following *résumé* newsletter articles for guidance:

- Winter 2010 (p. 4):
[Advertising & Solicitation](#)
- Spring 2010 (p. 5):
[Testimonials and Direct Solicitation of Clients](#)
- Summer 2010 (p. 7):
[Solicitation of a Client for Business When Your Client is a Group](#)

5. Fees

Consider the fees you will be charging for your services. CDO does not set fee schedules. However, we suggest you contact [Dietitians of Canada](#) for suggestions on appropriate fees. Their telephone number is: 416-596-0857. Alternatively, you can contact some of the other private practice RDs in your area to find out the going rate.

6. Charging Tax

According to the [Excise Tax Act](#), most dietetic services are exempt from HST and you do not need to charge PST for dietetic counselling services. The College has developed two resources surrounding the taxable services of RDs. Refer to the following links:

- Page 5 of the Summer 2003 issue of résumé newsletter contains an article on [Charging GST](#), HST would also apply.
Online E-learning module: [Charting GST/HST](#)

7. Consent

In a hospital setting, getting informed consent for a series of treatments that includes nutrition intervention may not necessarily be the responsibility of the RD. It may be the responsibility of the person explaining the services offered and taking an initial overall history. However, in your private practice it will be your responsibility to obtain informed consent for your nutrition intervention. This area needs special attention in private practice, refer to [Standards of Consent to Treatment and for the Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Health Information](#).

8. Record Keeping

Record keeping and documentation is as important in private practice as it is in any practice area. Please refer to the CDO [Professional Practice Standards for Record Keeping](#) (2017), [Record Keeping Guidelines for Registered Dietitians](#) (2014) and Chapter 8 (Record Keeping) of the [Jurisprudence Handbook for Dietitians in Ontario](#).

9. Confidentiality & Privacy

As a private practice RD, you are the Health Information Custodian (HIC) and you are the Privacy Officer of your independent practice. You must acquaint yourself with the [Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004](#). You may also want to consult chapters 5 & 6 on Privacy and Confidentiality in the [Jurisprudence Handbook for Dietitians in Ontario](#), as well as the [Privacy of Personal Information Dietetic Practice Tool Kit](#). As a HIC, you are responsible for ensuring privacy, confidentiality, storage, retention, destruction and access of client health information are secure.

10. Liability Insurance

Effective April 1, 2011, it is now mandatory for RDs to carry professional liability. Refer to this [link](#) for more information about liability insurance.

11. Personal Injury/Disability Insurance

There are some employers that require contracted RDs to have some form of independent personal injury/disability coverage. This is because the contracted employees are not covered under the facility's Workplace Safety & Insurance Board of Ontario (WSIB) insurance plan. In addition, the Professional Liability Insurance that many private practice or consulting RDs have through Dietitians of Canada, doesn't cover RDs who encounter a personal injury in the workplace that wasn't caused by a third party (i.e., an RD slips and falls and breaks their leg at work).

For, RDs there are two options:

- A. Obtain individual WSIB insurance. RDs can investigate this option through the [WSIB](#) website or contact WSIB by phone at: 1-800-569-7919 or 416-344-4526.
- B. Obtain personal injury/disability insurance through an independent insurance company. RDs can look into rates from many insurance companies to determine the most economical option. The insurance company that offers the Professional Liability Insurance through Dietitians of Canada (the professional associations) offers such insurance. When the College contacted them, they indicated they may be able to provide discounted rates for personal disability insurance for RDs who currently have the [Professional Liability Insurance through Dietitians of Canada](#).

12. Contact an Accountant and/or Lawyer

As with any business you may want to consult an accountant and/or a lawyer for advice. Some RDs register their business for tax purposes, but others file their taxes as being self-employed. RDs in private practice will need to discuss their options with their accountant and/or lawyer. Refer to the [Canada Revenue Agency](#) website for more information about registering businesses.

Incorporation may also be a route you may wish to take. Please refer to the [Guide to an Application for a Certificate of Authorization for Health Profession Corporations](#) for more information.

13. Additional Resource

You may find the *Dietitians in Private Practice: A Guide for the Consultant* developed by the Consulting Dietitians Network of Dietitians of Canada a useful resource. Contact [Dietitians of Canada](#) for further information about this resource. If you are a DC member, you may also want to consider becoming a member of the Consulting Dietitians Network which can provide you with a great deal of resources.

The College understands that this document contains a great deal of information to consider when starting a private practice. We have heard RDs say “I am only going to see a couple of clients, why do I have to bother with all of this?” It does not matter if you see one client; your professional obligations remain the same.

If you have any other questions or require clarification on any issues, please don't hesitate to contact the College's [Practice Advisory Service](#).



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The College of Dietitians of Ontario is dedicated to public protection. We regulate and support Registered Dietitians for the enhancement of safe, ethical and competent nutrition services in diverse practice environments.