



# RD Board Advisory Document for the Hospital Dietetic Department

## Advisory for the Dietitians in the Hospitals and the OPD for the Management of COVID 19.

COVID 19 is a serious pandemic in the current times that does not have a precedent available for hospital and community nutrition practice. Thus, the RD Board felt it necessary to provide an advisory statement regarding its management and allied issues for the hospital dietetic practice. The advisory is a guideline and a resource and the practitioner is encouraged to use clinical judgement and evidence-based resources continually to upgrade on the advisory provided.

This advisory consists of two parts:

- A. Guidelines that the dietitian and her team can follow for protection as well as patient care.
- B. Rd Board Appendices with (a) protocols formulated by the RD Board after a review of literature and (b) documents that can be used as reference material.

### PART A: The Guidelines:

1. **Safety of the practitioner and the dietetics team:** The Dietetic head must take the lead to discuss the following with her team and ensure its rigorous practice in her facility by herself and her team. (Refer to RD Board Appendix 1 & 2. A )
  - Hand Washing and hygiene guidelines
  - Communication guidelines and safety precautions while interacting with patients or those in quarantine – gowns, masks, bedside protocol, distance to be maintained and safety during assessment, care while handling files
  - Exploration of online guidance or video conferencing for the dietetic teams where possible. Patient footfall in the OPD needs to be reduced and digital means of consultation and communication can be used. Quarantined patients and patients in early stages of COVID 19 can be counselled remotely as much as possible.
2. **Food Safety Guidelines:** The hospitals which have the Food Service as their responsibility must look at the following closely, quickly create guidelines with regards the following and monitor safety: (Refer to RD Board Appendix 2. A.)
  - Food procurement and storage sanitation practices
  - Food handling during pre-preparation and delivery
  - Education of the kitchen and delivery staff
3. **Medical Nutrition Protocol for patients with COVID 19:** Guidelines for medical nutrition therapy have been suggested for the various stages of COVID 19 (Refer to RD Board Appendices 3 A -G). However, this is a guideline and clinical judgement needs to be applied as required. Relevant and scientific documents for detailed reading regarding intensive care nutrition in COVID 19.



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4. **A guideline for the community to eat healthy and support the immune system:** The Dietetic team is encouraged to communicate digitally with the common man in their local area regarding safe and healthy eating and lifestyle practices and methods to boost immunity. The video link provided by the Indian Dietetic Association can be used as a resource material for this purpose.
5. **Advisory regarding internship:** As stated by the RD Board earlier, RD interns must be considered as students. Thus, their internship can be shifted to a postponed date as per the National Lockdown and the protective closure of educational institutes. This is of prime importance in areas where COVID 19 is at a high risk of transmission and also applies to outstation interns. The Hospital trainer should take decisions in line with National, local and hospital policies for the same. If a request for leave is asked by the intern during the lockdown period is asked for by the intern on the grounds of safety, it must be granted. In the present situation, this is till April 15<sup>th</sup>. Post that, the situation will need to be looked into based on the conditions at that time.

However, the internship period that has been shifted will have to be completed in full with regards the case numbers and competency package as well as the number of days, hours and rotations as soon as the situation improves.

We understand that due to this postponement and the postponement of university exams, the next batch of internship admissions will be delayed by a period of a minimum of two months. With this regard, the RD Board is working out a strategy to ensure that maximum can apply for the RD exam and this will be shared by end April based on the COVID 19 situation prevailing in April.

6. **Directives to the RD Representatives/ convenors of every chapter:**
  - Share the IDA website links where the present document is available or send this information packet to all hospital, OPD, Consultant, community dietitians and academic institutes affiliated to their chapter.
  - Very imperative to report back on the internship details in the RD Training hospitals in their chapter, the number of internships postponed and the methods of completion once resumed, so that the RD Board is assured of an adequate internship programme and so as to help us make adjustments with regard RD exam.
  - All convenors please note that we will be sending directives to your RD Representatives for collecting information about the student in their state, if you haven't still submitted your RD representative's names to the RD Board, please do so now. The Board would like to acknowledge and appreciate the states who have proactively sent their RD representative names. Even if your state does not have recognised hospital you still have to send names, this will only help in disseminating information more smoothly. Fill in the form regarding internship details by this link – <https://forms.gle/tWd9BNofKQUJ6ins9>
  - Communicate the same to academic institutes so that they can advise their students as future interns as well as provide the guideline materials to incorporate in the academic discussions.



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- Encourage the hospital dietitians to document the measures for personnel and food safety and digital communication that they practiced for academic sharing, publication and future references.
- The RD Board strongly recommends the rigorous documentation of the Nutritional Management of COVID 19 at multiple stages of the disease as a means to gather knowledge on tackling such conditions in the future. Thus, The RD rep/ convenor is responsible for identifying hospitals in your chapter which treat COVID 19 patients and direct dietitians to document the dietary protocols followed. Each Chapter is encouraged to make a resource material of at least five such cases which can be nationally compiled to become a shared resource.
- For any assistance please do feel to write to [rdboardida@gmail.com](mailto:rdboardida@gmail.com)

All of you please Stay Safe!!!

Bamini. M

RD Board Chairperson