

Adverse Food Reactions Role Statement

Developed by members of the Food Allergy and Intolerance Interest Group

Introduction

Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) are recognised professionals with the qualifications and skills to provide expert nutrition and dietary advice. APDs are qualified to advise individuals and groups on nutrition-related matters.

APDs have university training accredited by Dietitians Australia (DA), undertake ongoing professional development and commit to evidence-based practice. They comply with the [Dietitians Australia Code of Conduct for Dietitians & Nutritionists](#) and commit to providing quality service.

APD is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government, Medicare, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Disability Insurance Agency and most private health funds as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia. It is a recognised trademark protected by law.

Purpose of this role statement

The purpose of this Role Statement is:

- To define the role an APD may fulfil when working in the area of adverse food reactions, i.e. immune mediated and non-immune mediated¹
- To promote the knowledge and expertise of an APD, broadly and in the area of adverse food reactions and beyond [National Competency Standards](#)
- To advocate for dietetic services

Knowledge and skills in this area of practice

Entry level dietetic competencies ensure all APDs can conduct assessments, diagnose nutritional issues, and develop, monitor and evaluate interventions. Within a particular practice area, APD skills and knowledge will range from entry level to highly skilled. Within this continuum APDs can either fully manage the patient, seek support to continue seeing the patient or refer the patient on.

The following is a list of skills and knowledge required to work in the adverse food reactions area and has been adapted from the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology:²

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the immune system; recognition of the clinical features of adverse food reactions and understanding of the typical presentation of the wide range of associated conditions and diseases

- Knowledge of food labelling and foods/food compounds (e.g. allergens, gluten) and which commonly cause or trigger adverse food reactions
- Understand the orthodox and unorthodox³ diagnostic tests; including the concepts, value, interpretation, associated risks, contraindications, and practical applications
- Knowledge of the evidence base, for nutritional intervention, monitoring, and evaluation of management of adverse food reactions
- Awareness of risks of nutritional inadequacy, appropriate products for substitution and supplements to use if required
- Awareness of relevant co-factors and non-dietary triggers (e.g. exercise, alcohol, NSAIDs) and knowledge of medications used for treatment

Skills

- Take and interpret a clinical history, including: diet, anthropometry (including growth in children and weight changes in adults), symptoms, triggers, medical, family, ethnicity, atopy, co-factors and social factors
- Determine the likelihood of a food/food compound triggering food-related symptoms
- Apply diagnostic information to guide prescription, implementation and evaluation of an appropriate, nutritionally sound individualised exclusion diet; considering the impact on quality of life
- Provide education, including label reading and making food substitutions, to ensure nutritional adequacy
- Provide nutrition advice in the paediatric population (role specific), appropriate for age and stage; including breastfeeding, maternal diet manipulation, infant formulae. Advise on suitable milk substitutes for infants and children including their indications and contra-indications

Activities entry level APDs would conduct:

- Management of patients with simple nutrition needs (e.g. single food allergy, no growth compromise, no co-morbidities), within the multidisciplinary team, including consultation with an appropriate medical practitioner

Activities APDs working at a higher level would conduct:

- Management of patients with complex nutrition needs (e.g. multiple food allergies, growth compromise, co-morbidities), within the multidisciplinary team, including consultation with an appropriate medical practitioner
- Research contributing to the evidence base in nutrition and adverse food reactions

Practitioners should refer to the [Scope of Practice Decision Tool](#) to determine if a task is within their scope of practice.

Activities Dietitians working in this area of practice do not usually undertake:

- Diagnose immune mediated adverse food reactions (e.g. food allergy, coeliac disease)
- Provide medical management, including conducting supervised food allergen challenges

References

1. Food Allergy Clinical Update. Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA). <https://www.allergy.org.au/hp/papers/food-allergy>. Published 2017. Accessed April 24, 2019.
2. Skypala et al 2018, Competencies for Allied Health Professionals Working in a Clinical Allergy Setting, European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. <https://ctajournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13601-018-0218-7>. Accessed April 24, 2019.
3. Unorthodox Allergy Tests and Treatments. Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA). <https://www.allergy.org.au/patients/allergy-testing/unorthodox-testing-and-treatment>. Published 2019. Accessed April 24, 2019.