



Contact: Pamela Hamilton, MS, RD, LD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tel. 304/367-4297

Email: Pamela.Hamilton@fairmontstate.edu

The Experts Who Really Do Know Best

On Registered Dietitian Day, Seek Advice from the Professionals

FAIRMONT – If you need to remodel your kitchen, you call a licensed contractor. When your car has trouble, you take it to a mechanic. So why would you cut corners when it comes to your health by taking food and nutrition advice from a friend, Web site, or other non-expert?

“Most people wouldn’t dream of changing the oil in their car by themselves but will follow advice from a total stranger in a forwarded e-mail when it comes to losing weight,” says registered and licensed dietitian and West Virginia Dietetic Association president Amy Gannon.

On Registered Dietitian Day — March 10, during National Nutrition Month® — the American Dietetic Association reminds everyone that the best source of practical, affordable and accurate nutrition information is a registered dietitian.

Registered Dietitian Day was created by ADA to increase awareness of RDs as the indispensable providers of food and nutrition services and to recognize their commitment to helping people enjoy healthy lives.

When seeking expert guidance on food and nutrition, Gannon says: “Look for the credential. While some registered dietitians call themselves nutritionists, not all nutritionists are registered dietitians. There is a very big and very important difference between the two.” West Virginia along with many other states has a licensure law that defines how a “nutritionist” can legally practice. In other states, virtually anyone can call him-or-herself a “nutritionist” with little or no education or training.

To earn the RD credential requires earning a bachelor's degree (about half of RDs hold advanced degrees), completing a supervised practice program and passing a registration examination, in addition to maintaining continuing education requirements for recertification. In addition, thousands of RDs have earned advanced specialty credentials in sports, kidney, oncology, gerontological and pediatric nutrition.

“Registered dietitians in West Virginia, especially those who are members of the American Dietetic Association, and our state affiliate WVDA, are the state’s best source of timely, accurate and reliable information on a healthy lifestyle, providing expert guidance that is personalized, doable and affordable,” Gannon says.

“A registered dietitian will be able to develop an individual and healthful approach for you,” Gannon says. “Rather than following a one-size-fits-all fad diet approach to weight loss, you will receive help that will target your needs, your likes and dislikes, your lifestyle and your individual health issues.

“A book cannot tell you if you are at risk for heart disease and a Web site can’t determine if you have pre-diabetes. These are questions that can be addressed through diet but require an individualized approach to achieve healthy, lasting results that are right for you.”

To find a registered dietitian in your area, log onto www.eatright.org and click on the “Find a Registered Dietitian” button on the right side of the screen.

The American Dietetic Association is the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. ADA is committed to improving the nation’s health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the American Dietetic Association at www.eatright.org.

WVDA improves the Health of West Virginians by Informing the Public of ways to Improve their Health

**THE WEST VIRGINIA DIETETIC ASSOCIATION
YOUR LOCAL NUTRITION EXPERTS**

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