

Dietetics in Integrative Medicine

We certainly agree with [a recent article](#) highlighting a new direction in the practice of medicine that gives prominence to nutrition. Dietetics and integrative medicine is the way of the future. Integrative medicine moves away from treating the disease to treating the underlying cause of the disease in a particular person. For example, someone with diabetes could manage their blood glucose with medication. But under the integrative paradigm, there is no cookie cutter approach. Individualized prescriptions for diet, exercise, or other lifestyle factors would be provided, and nutrient deficiencies would be addressed with either diet or supplements. The integrative approach is especially suited to chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer, so prevalent in the US today. Such treatment can reduce or eliminate the need for medication. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) are well-prepared to help patients manage lifestyle changes. RDNs trained in integrative and functional medicine have more specific knowledge surrounding supplements, inflammation, immune regulation, and genetics.

Though not a clinical setting, God's Love We Deliver supports the integrative medicine approach because we deliver healthy, well-balanced, and nutritious meals to our clients. For many, this goes a long way to begin to address underlying inflammation and nutrient deficiencies that may have been in place a long time and that contributed to their disease state. Through first-hand testimonials and the results of our annual client survey, we know that our program helps our clients live more independently, eat more nutritiously, and manage their medical treatment and medications more effectively.

The Nutrition Services Department at God's Love We Deliver takes the integrative approach to heart. Four of us attended a continuing education lecture in May that focused on integrative gastroenterology. (The Gut Balance Revolution: Boost Your Metabolism, Restore Your Inner Ecology and Lose the Weight for Good; Dr. Gerard Mullin). The Nutrition Department also hosted a Ryan White Nutrition Group lecture on Integrative Nutrition a few years ago. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), a national professional organization, has a Dietetic Practice Group called Dietitians in Integrative and Functional Medicine (DIFM). Several of us are members. DIFM offers lectures and other education opportunities. They are also developing a certificate program in integrative nutrition. This focus on integrative medicine is part and parcel of our belief that food is medicine and our commitment to helping our clients be as healthy as possible for as long as they are able.