



# Developing Provincial Nutrition Guidelines For Wound Prevention And Management: A Guideline For British Columbia's Registered Dietitians

By Ellen Mackay RD MSc CDE, Esther Huang RD, Mignon Radhakrishnan MEd RD and Shannon Handfield RN BSN NSWOC WOCC(C)

**How to cite:** Mackay E, Huang E, Radhakrishnan M, Handfield S. Developing provincial nutrition guidelines for wound prevention and management: a guideline for British Columbia's registered dietitians. *Wound Care Canada*. 2024;22(1): 6-8. DOI: [10.56885/HYFD6379](https://doi.org/10.56885/HYFD6379).

In late 2021, the British Columbia Provincial Interprofessional Skin & Wound Committee, led by Shannon Handfield, saw the need for a nutrition-focused dietitian sub-committee to develop provincial resources for health-care team members caring for clients with, and at-risk for, wounds.

Registered dietitians (RD) from across British

Columbia (BC) and the Yukon, with a focus on wound care and prevention in their practice, were invited to join this volunteer committee. RDs were recruited through word of mouth and a provincial listserv. Fifteen RDs answered the call with representation from each Health Authority across BC and including the Yukon. The result was the formation of the British Columbia Provincial



Registered Dietitian Wound Sub-Committee (RDWSC).

The initial intent for this sub-committee was to develop a stand-alone nutrition guideline for nurses working in wound care. Previously, each wound guideline developed by the Interprofessional Skin & Wound Committee had its own nutrition section. However, when the RDWSC recognized that there were no current, up-to-date, evidence-based nutrition guidelines for RDs, this became the new priority. After the development of the nutrition guidelines for RDs, the subcommittee pivoted to working on a stand-alone guideline that provided nutrition recommendations that are within the scope of nursing when caring for patients with wounds.

### **Guide For Dietitians**

In 2022, the sub-committee met virtually each month to review the most up-to-date nutrition evidence, best practice guidelines and available

client education materials, and to share direct clinical experience. Over the course of 18 months, they created the document *Nutrition for Wound Prevention & Management: Guideline for Dietitians* (available at <https://www.clwk.ca/get-resource/nutrition-for-wound-prevention-management-guideline-for-dietitians/>).

This decision support tool (DST) supports RDs in providing key nutrition interventions for wound prevention and management for all wound etiologies for adult clients. The intended audiences for the document are entry level RDs and RDs new to the area of wound care.

The DST was put forward for provincial partner review in July 2023 and has now been endorsed by all health authorities in BC and the Yukon. (Note: at time of publication, endorsement was pending for the Northern Health Authority.) Following endorsement, the DST was presented in November 2023 at the Vancouver Coastal Health/ Providence Health's annual Dietetics in Action education event.

## Sub-Committee Health Authorities Representatives

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>First Nations Health Authority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tessie Harris RD</li> </ul>                         | <b>Interior Health Authority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liam Pierce RD, CDSC</li> </ul>   | <b>Providence Health Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yoon Heo RD, CNSC</li> </ul>                                       |
| <b>Fraser Health Authority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hannah Mazure RD</li> <li>Alison Schmidbauer RD</li> </ul> | <b>Northern Health Authority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judy April MAdEd, RD</li> <li>Tanis Mihalynuk PhD, RD</li> </ul>  | <b>Yukon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cynthia Chubbs RD, BScN</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Island Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erica Messing RD</li> <li>Christy Remington RD</li> </ul>            | <b>Vancouver Coastal Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Esther Huang RD</li> <li>Ellen Mackay MSc RD CDE - Chair</li> <li>Mignon Radhakrishnan MEd, RD</li> <li>Swati Scott RD, IBCLC, CDE</li> <li>Anna Slivinski RD</li> </ul> | With support from:<br>Shannon Handfield, RN BSN NSWOC<br>Provincial Professional Practice<br>Stream Lead – Wound Ostomy Con-<br>tinence |

### Guide For Nurses

Guided by the RD DST, the sub-committee has now drafted a document for nurses: *Nutrition for Wound Prevention & Healing: Nursing Guidelines*. This draft DST guides nurses in supporting nutritional intake for clients with a wound or who are at-risk for developing a wound, performing malnutrition screening and understanding when to refer to an RD for an individualized nutrition care plan for the prevention and management of wounds. This DST is currently out for review, with a target of endorsement in the summer of 2024.

### First Nations: Remote And Rural Support

The sub-committee is fortunate to have volunteers from the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) who have supported the committee's efforts to create culturally safe and inclusive resources. RDs from the RDWSC have volunteered to provide consultation to clinicians working in rural and remote areas of BC and the Yukon who are new to, or need support with, caring for clients with wounds.

### Next Steps: Updating Nutrition And The Wounds Learning Module

Currently, the RD sub-committee is drafting an interactive learning module for nursing and allied health providers. This module will review the key nutrition requirements and interventions

to support skin integrity, wound prevention and healing. Targeted launch for the learning module is fall 2024. The RDWSC is also looking to expand the guidelines to support the pediatric population.

**Ellen Mackay RD MSc CDE** is a diabetes educator at Vancouver Coastal Health's North Shore Chronic Disease Services, in West Vancouver BC, Canada.

**Esther Huang RD** is a community dietitian at Vancouver Coastal Health's Three Bridges Community Health Centre, in Vancouver BC, Canada.

**Mignon Radhakrishnan MEd RD** is a critical care dietitian at Vancouver General Hospital, Vancouver BC, Canada.

**Shannon Handfield RN BSN NSWOC** WOCC(C) is the British Columbia Provincial Professional Practice Stream Lead for Wound Ostomy Continence.