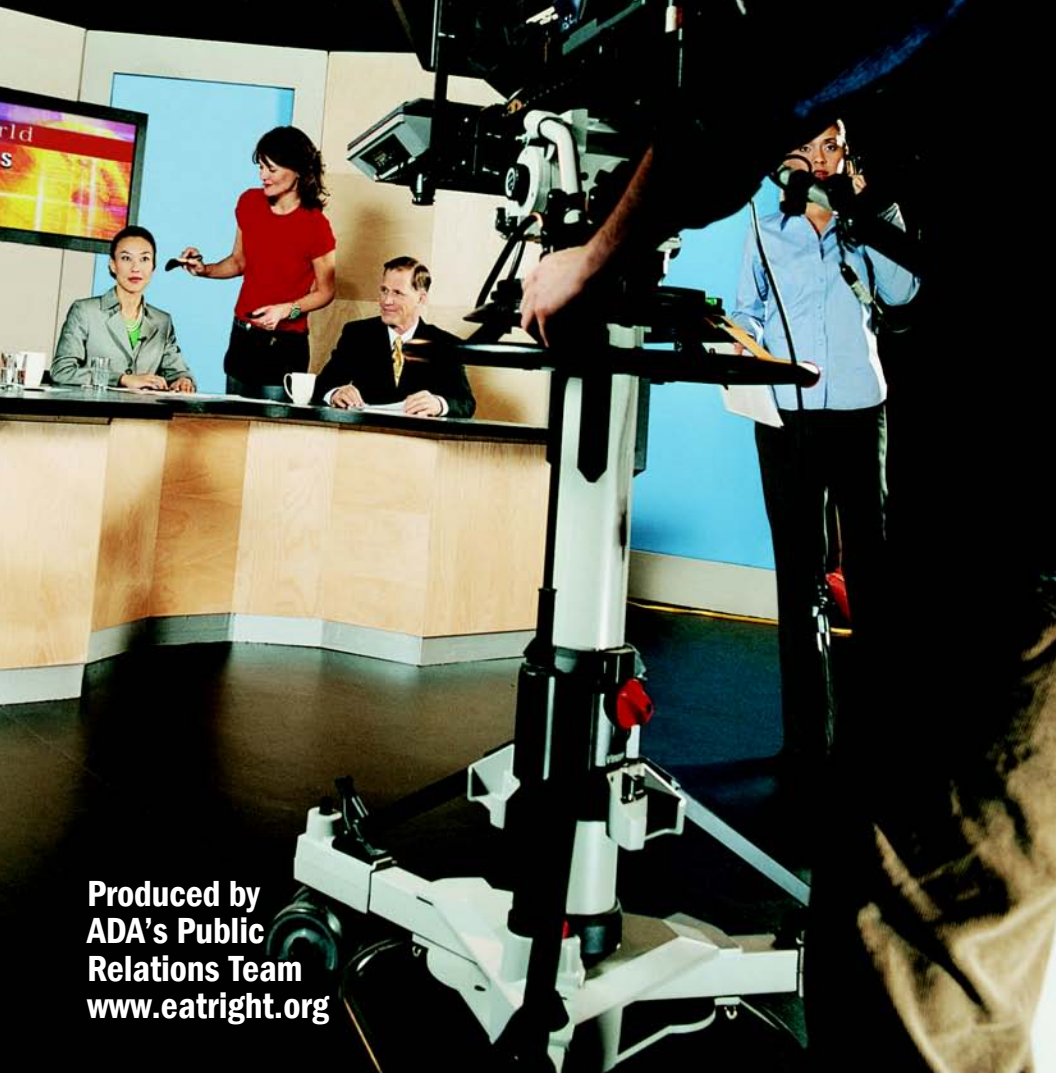


# Working with the Media:

A Handbook for  
Members of the  
American Dietetic Association



Produced by  
ADA's Public  
Relations Team  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

THIS HANDBOOK WILL HELP YOU:

.....

Learn to communicate  
effectively to the public,  
to the media and  
in your personal and  
professional life  
.....

Gain insight on how the  
media operate and  
monitor their coverage  
.....

Develop productive  
working relationships  
with journalists  
.....

Create and “pitch” newsworthy  
food and nutrition stories  
to the media  
.....

Conduct media interviews with  
confidence and control

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A Handbook for  
Members of the  
American Dietetic Association

*Produced by ADA's Public Relations Team*

**American Dietetic Association**  
*Your link to nutrition and health.<sup>SM</sup>*

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**[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)**



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## Introduction

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**T**he food and nutrition experts of the American Dietetic Association are the best source of timely, accurate and reliable information on eating well. Effectively communicating your knowledge and your expertise is one of the most important things any ADA member can do to promote your Association, your profession and yourself.

Business and community leaders. Legislators and policy makers. Other health professionals and their organizations. Educators. The general public. Patients and clients (both current and potential). Employers. The news media. The ability to communicate with each of these individuals and groups—to share your knowledge and prove your value—is vital to your continued success and growth, and to that of ADA and the dietetics profession.

In your workplace, in your community, in your nation . . . You are the expert. This handbook will help you make sure the world knows it.

The advice and examples in these pages focus on building and maintaining productive working relationships with members of the news media—from creating story ideas to conducting interviews and establishing yourself as an indispensable resource for your local media.

However, you'll quickly find these tools (not to mention the confidence you will build) can be applied to improving your skills at other forms of communication—giving a presentation, writing a proposal, meeting with a supervisor, working with clients, soliciting donor support, reporting to an oversight committee.

There are as many different communication opportunities as there are ADA members. And by learning to work with the media, you can take advantage of all these opportunities and create more of them for yourself.

## Getting people's attention

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Today, stories related to food and nutrition are found on the front page, in the business, sports and real estate sections, on education and career pages and more. By using your imagination, there is almost no limit to the numbers of journalists and types of media whom a dietetics professional can reach with your expertise and ADA's healthful-eating messages. And it can be a lot of fun, too!

Reporters want stories. They have space and airtime to fill each day. Because of ever-increasing public interest in news about health and wellness, a good deal of newspaper and magazine space, radio and TV airtime and Internet Web pages are devoted to these topics.

## ADA and the news media

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ADA maintains a strong commitment to telling our story through the media. And we are remarkably successful, annually achieving about seven billion media impressions (a measure of the numbers of readers or viewers of a particular article or program).

ADA provides media training and supports a national network of volunteer media spokespeople—all ADA members like yourself—who conduct thousands of interviews each year on behalf of the Association. See the Appendix (page 53) for information on becoming an ADA spokesperson.

**A HELPFUL HAND**  
ADA's Public Relations Team is available to help you work with the news media.

**Call**  
800/877-1600,  
ext. 4802, 4769  
or 4806  
or e-mail  
media@eatright.org

## **Defining terms**

In this handbook, the term “media” is used to mean free coverage in print, broadcast and electronic media outlets. Paid advertising is, of course, very effective; but the costs, even for local publications, can exceed many individuals’ or organizations’ budgets.

For the most part, when it comes to spreading the word about the American Dietetic Association, the dietetics profession and healthful eating, your best bet is through the news media.

## **Role and image of dietetics professionals**

There is much that each individual member can do to provide the media with positive, newsworthy information about food and nutrition issues and the dietetics profession. You can play a part in enhancing the role and image of the profession.

Working with the news media will do much to help you and your affiliate be recognized as the best and most credible sources of science-based food and nutrition information and to help increase consumers’ demand for your services. You can do it.



# Getting started

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## How do the news media operate?

Whether it's a small-town weekly or the *New York Times*, the local-access cable TV station or CNN—before you can work effectively with journalists, you need to understand how reporters and editors operate. What stories do the media cover? Which reporters cover which types of stories? How does coverage differ between TV and print media? Or between different papers or stations? Knowing the answers to these questions will greatly improve your ability to get on the air or see your name in print.

## Be a media monitor

You can find out much of this information by monitoring the media. You need to know what the media are interested in covering—which often differs from newspaper to newspaper, station to station or reporter to reporter.

## Read the newspaper. Watch the TV news. Listen to the radio.

There is no substitute for “doing your homework.” You must know the audience you hope to reach.

## Keep tabs on the media you want to pitch

- Topics they have covered
- Types of experts they interview
- Areas that seem to be of recurring interest.

## Follow professional literature

- Know what is going on in the dietetics profession. Read the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* and ADA's position statements.
- Stay current on studies published in other health and medical journals.

## A LITTLE WORK NOW . . .

If your goal is to establish a long-term relationship with the media that has ongoing benefits for you, your employer or your local state association, you need to find out what the media covers.

A few weeks spent reading publications and watching/listening to programs (and staying up-to-date with personnel and format changes) can pay big dividends down the road.

- Keep up on Association and headquarters news by reading *ADA Times*, and by subscribing to *CEO Digest*, *Daily News*, DPG and affiliate newsletters.
- Follow health and nutrition policy issues in ADA's *On the Pulse*, *Grassroots Times* and *MNT Provider*.
- Read nutrition-related newsletters.
- Attend continuing education meetings and scientific conferences.

**TIP:** Local print and broadcast reporters often get ideas from these national publications . . . and so can you.

### **Know what the public wants to read, view and hear**

- Visit your local bookstore and browse the shelves of diet books, cookbooks and self-help books (and regularly check the best-seller lists).
- Search the Internet for nutrition and health news sites (see page 52).
- Review what is being covered in such popular consumer publications as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Glamour*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Prevention*, *Self*, *Fitness*, *Shape*, WebMD, Associated Press, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*.

### **What do reporters want?**

The needs of TV differ from those of radio and they're both different from print outlets. But some general principles apply to virtually all types of media:

- It's been said that **three-quarters of the news is "N-E-W."** A reporter's job is to tell readers, viewers and listeners things they don't already know—preferably before their competition has the story. What do you have to offer that is new or that gives an unusual perspective on a familiar topic? Has anyone else covered this story recently? Most reporters will not be interested in a story that is similar to something they "just covered"—meaning at least the past several months.
- All journalists operate on **tight deadlines**. These deadlines can be any time of the day or night, depending on when the newspaper is published, the TV news program airs, etc. Know and respect deadlines as much as reporters do.

- **Remember the “five Ws”**—Who, What, Where, When, Why (plus How). Those basic questions are the foundation of the media’s work. A good reporter will ask them all in one form or another. Ask and answer them in your own mind—better yet, on a piece of paper—before contacting the media.
- **Another “W.”** This “W” question is at least as important as the others: “Who cares?” Is this story interesting? To whom? Why would an average person want to read this story or watch it on TV? Reporters and editors will expect you to put your story idea into context and to demonstrate its value and newsworthiness to their audience—preferably without being asked.
- Reporters cover happenings in their **community**. For the *Wall Street Journal* or CNN, the community is the whole world, but for most newspapers and TV stations, the community is their home town. If in the reporter’s or editor’s mind the story would not be of interest to their audience, it will not be covered. Keep your focus local—would my next-door neighbor want to read or watch this story?
- All reporters have **editors**. (And editors work for publishers or station managers.) In order to get a story in print or on the air, a reporter must convince his or her editor that a story is newsworthy. Part of your job is to arm reporters with the information they’ll need to convince their higher-ups that the story should be covered.
- **The truth and nothing but.** Reporters prize honesty, accuracy and credibility in their sources. Get your facts straight. Make certain everything you say is true, accurate and verifiable.

## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

**T**hink of other dietetics professionals in your area as allies in bringing reliable food and nutrition information to the media and the public. Get to know as many of your colleagues as you can. Find out their

areas of expertise and share your own. Brainstorm and swap ideas. As always, don’t hesitate to draw on the knowledge and expertise of ADA’s spokesperson network, your state media representative or affiliate PR chair.

**TIPS:** Print media will likely be the primary focus of your media efforts—local dailies and weeklies, area magazines and trade publications, newsletters and more.

Many newspapers have special sections for health, food, etc.

Food sections usually appear in the middle of the week and have relatively long lead times. Be sure to ask for deadline information.

When you read an article that is especially good, drop the reporter a note or an e-mail to offer your compliments on a job well done and to offer your help on future stories.

## **Print, TV, radio: What's the difference?**

.....

By now, you've been monitoring your local media and have developed at least a sense of what is considered news and who covers what, where, when, why and how. And you may have already discovered some of these general differences between various types of media and the stories they seek.

### **Newspapers**

Most newspapers operate on a "beat" system, in which reporters are responsible for stories that pertain to specific topics. Larger papers have more specialized beats, but even smaller newspapers probably have one or more reporters assigned to food, medicine/health, lifestyle/fitness, science, business or consumer affairs. You can learn who these reporters are by reading the paper (or by checking out its Web site). The managing editor's office also should be able to supply you with names of beat reporters.

## Radio

Scan the local dial for stations that carry public affairs shows, community calendars, local news reports, talk shows and specialty shows such as health and fitness.

Later, we'll cover tips for conducting print, TV and radio interviews (see page 30).

## Television

The television challenge is to discover the full range of air opportunities and learn how to access them. TV programming opportunities include newscasts, community calendar announcements, public service announcements, public affairs shows and entertainment talk programs. We'll discuss each of these types of shows in more detail later (see page 36).

Most TV and radio news/talk programs have producers—a reporter or editor who works with the host, helps decide which stories to cover, develops topics and questions for the program and books guests. Obtain contact information for producers of the shows you're interested in. You will need to convince the producer of your story's value before it gets on the air.

Television covers stories in the briefest amount of time, but it has the most impact. ADA's 2002 *Nutrition and You* public opinion survey found that, by a wide margin, television is America's most popular source of food and nutrition information.

**TIPS:** Many radio stations have Web sites that contain schedule information and the names of hosts, producers or other contacts.

Radio, especially issues-oriented talk shows or public-service programs, can be an important and effective outlet for information about your community service activities.

## WHAT MAKES A STORY NEWSWORTHY?

**H**ow do you know if you have a story idea that might be of interest to the media? Be sure your story is . . .

- Interesting to a general audience, not just dietetics professionals
- Timely
- Relevant

- Informative
- Educational
- Locally oriented

Each of these represents an aspect of newsworthiness. Incorporate them into your pitch to the media to help get your story on the air or in print.

## Have a plan

.....

As with all business activities, the key to ongoing success in media relations is preparing and executing a good plan. What do you want to accomplish? How will you get there? Developing a year-long plan that clearly identifies your goals and your strategies for achieving them will help you obtain publicity.

### Outline your objectives

Your key objectives should be to:

**Provide** a service: Give consumers practical advice and solid information on food and nutrition topics.

**Create** and maintain local awareness of you and your affiliate.

**Represent** all dietetics professionals in a credible manner as the food and nutrition expert.

**Educate** the community about your affiliate's community support and value.

**Position** your affiliate and all its members as contributors to the overall well-being of the community.

### Make contact

Based on your media monitoring, calls to newsrooms and other information gathering (such as the Yellow Pages, the Internet or media directories at your local library), create and regularly update a list of your media contacts. See the media data sheets in the Appendix. You can easily create your own lists and data sheets with a word processing or spreadsheet program. A media contact list will help you in many ways:

- Spelling counts! A media list ensures you have the correct spelling of a reporter's name. You will have a hard time convincing a reporter that you are a source of solid, reliable facts if you trip up on this basic and vital piece of information.
- Keep current phone and fax numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Keep deadline information for every media outlet you plan to work with.

- Jot down different outlets' and reporters' styles and interests.
- If a particular reporter isn't the right person to cover food and nutrition issues, ask who is and add him or her to the list.

## CREATIVE STORY IDEAS

- People want to read and hear stories about . . . people. Like themselves, their families, their neighbors. Unless you have made a major scientific finding, stories usually aren't considered interesting or newsworthy unless they relate to people. Make sure your story has "the human element."
  - Is your story interesting to the audience you want to reach?
  - Can you piggyback onto local, national and international issues, like obesity, diabetes, prescription drug benefits?
  - Tie your story to current events like political campaigns, block parties, street fairs, garden shows, county or state fairs.
  - Think beyond the food page. Pitch to the travel, sports, business and news sections.
  - Look for stories where the media look. Think of local angles to stories on the network news, national newspapers, cable news networks, Web sites, trade publications.
    - If you're pitching a story like a successful weight loss program at your medical center or the effectiveness of medical nutrition therapy for treating diabetes, a reporter will almost certainly ask to interview patients and clients who have benefited from treatment. Arrange for their availability beforehand and mention it in your pitch.
    - Can you illustrate your story? A picture is worth as many words as the old saying claims. Your chances of getting TV or newspaper coverage increase dramatically when great photo opportunities are available. If you're pitching a TV station a story on after-school snacks for grade-schoolers, be ready to provide samples.

## What's your story?

Now it's time to come up with story ideas you can pitch to the media.

### Work the angles

For a reporter to give your story the attention it deserves, you need to present it—quickly and concisely—as newsworthy, entertaining and worthwhile. In other words, answer the question “Who cares?”

You need a news hook or an angle. What is it about your story that transforms it from a nice factual account into “a grabber”—something that people will want to read or watch? What will command the interest of a reporter or editor the minute they hear about it? Because a minute is about all the time they'll spend thinking about your story before deciding thumbs-up or thumbs-down.

### The big three

Experience has shown that there are three sure-fire hooks that capture the public's (and therefore the media's) interest, and nutrition stories fit easily into each:

- Health
- Heart
- Pocketbook

Of course, food and nutrition are vital components of health. Human-interest stories, especially about children, the elderly or the person next door (obesity, heart disease, diabetes) touch the heart. And the economics of health-care (such as prescription drugs or medical nutrition therapy) hit the pocketbook.

## YOUR ASSOCIATION IS HERE TO HELP

**Y**ou can find a wide variety of nutrition-related resources and story ideas in the Media section of ADA's Web site, [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org). Check out the links to news releases and consumer education programs,

among other areas.

For more ideas, also see the Tip of the Day and Monthly Feature, which are posted to ADA's home page. Click on the link at the bottom of the Tips and Monthly Features for an archive of past stories.



## Look for ideas

Here are some ways to develop a list of potential publicity opportunities and story ideas for the media:

- Many newspapers and some TV stations maintain online searchable archives of their articles. Review past media coverage that was given to your affiliate and profession (or others).
  - What was covered well?
  - What was missing?
  - Could it have been covered better?
  - Could your contribution have made it better?
- Compile a list of upcoming Association or professional events of consumer interest (National Nutrition Month®, health fairs, new facility openings).
- Do the same for programs you sponsor (charities, educational activities, sports, cultural activities). Recommend that your affiliate seek additional opportunities.

Holidays are always a good time for food and nutrition stories: Summertime grilling and picnicking (a good chance to talk about *ADA's Home Food Safety . . . It's in Your Hands*™ program—visit [www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org) for more information), back-to-school stories about packing a healthy lunch for the kids, how to avoid overeating at year-end holiday parties and many more. See the Creative Calendar in the Appendix for holidays that can have food and nutrition tie-ins. Read new scientific studies on food and nutrition in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* and other journals. Many times, these studies can be adapted into stories for the general public.

Remember your target audience. For most consumer news media the audience is the general population of your community. Don't pitch a story idea that will be of interest only to other dietetics professionals or to a very small segment of the population. This will not interest most consumer media outlets—but it may very well interest trade or specialty media.

More story ideas and ADA resources are detailed in the Appendix.

**TIP:** Has your local newspaper or TV station recently run a profile of your affiliate association? Your involvement in the community can have news value.

**TIP:** Plan ahead. Don't call a reporter on July 3 with a suggestion for a Fourth of July story. For a newspaper or TV station, contact the media about two to three weeks in advance of the event. For a monthly magazine story, make it five or six months in advance.

## Approach the media with confidence and professionalism

.....

You've been monitoring the media. You know the different types of stories that print and broadcast reporters are looking for. You know which reporter covers what. And you've seen how often the perspective of a dietetics professional would add interest and expertise to a story. You know you would bring a valuable perspective to local coverage of food, nutrition and health issues. You've identified one or more newsworthy story ideas, anticipated the reporter's questions and know the answers.

It's time to contact the media.

**TIPS: Keep in touch!**  
Send a note to a reporter who has done a particularly good job on a story—even if it had nothing to do with food and nutrition. Don't go overboard.

In your note, add a short sentence or two on how you may be able to help with future stories. Tie in a first-hand experience or issue that might interest the reporter.

Be realistic; don't promise more than you can deliver.

Don't be a pest.

### **Business partners**

Think of the news media as your business partner in an important job: bringing accurate and reliable information to consumers. Reporters are people like you; they want to do their jobs well. And they need good working relationships with sources in order to do their jobs.

Approach the media as you would any business transaction. Be prudent, savvy, knowledgeable, confident, professional . . . and objective. You want the media to think of you as a credible source of unbiased information that they and their audience can rely upon—not as a self-promoter who's trying to sell books, drum up new business or become famous. It's up to you to come across as the unbiased professional you are.

### **The spotlight is on you (that's good!)**

To a reporter, few things are as important as this: His or her sources need to be **credible**. If false or misleading information makes it into the newspaper or on television, every reader or viewer is misinformed and the credibility of the media outlet is damaged.

When it comes to protecting and improving people's health, misleading information can have serious consequences. Providing correct food and nutrition information, on the other hand, can help people become healthier and can even save lives.

On questions of food and nutrition, the credible

source is, of course, the credentialed dietetics professional. So your first goal in working with the media is to ensure they know that.

## Identify yourself

Whenever you are speaking with a reporter or editor, immediately make clear who you are.

Always mention:

**Your credential as a dietetics professional:** “I am a registered dietitian.” Or “I am a dietetic technician, registered.” When it comes to establishing your credibility to speak to the media, this is the most important piece of ID you carry.

**A short description of your qualifications to speak on a given topic.** “I have been working in the field of nutrition for X number of years with a specialty in . . .” This makes it immediately clear that you are qualified to speak on the issues.

**For whom you are speaking**—such as your state affiliate, employer or yourself. This avoids confusion on the reporter’s part and the public’s.

## Whose voice are you using?

Your thoughts on a given subject in food and nutrition—well-informed as they are—may differ from ADA’s official position on the issue; and each may be different from the position of your employer. If you are speaking to the media on behalf of your state affiliate, it is best not to volunteer your place of employment.

If a reporter asks where you work, go ahead and say it—but stress that you are speaking on behalf of your state dietetic association and not your employer and you would prefer to be

## POSSIBLE INTERVIEW SCENARIO

**Reporter:** I’m Joe Martin from the *Tallahassee Times*. I’d like to ask you some questions about preventing childhood obesity.

**Appropriate response from you:** I’d be delighted. As you may know, I am a registered dietitian and a spokesperson for the (Affiliate/State) Dietetic Association.

**Likely reporter response:** Great.

**Less likely reporter response:** Oh, I thought you worked for Tallahassee General Hospital.

**Appropriate response:** Yes, I do. But I speak on behalf of the (State) Dietetic Association and not my place of employment.

**Likely reporter response:** O.K.

identified as such in the article. Or vice-versa, as the case may be. Reporters are generally accommodating to such requests. (See the interview scenario on the previous page.)

And, since all ADA members are credible sources for food and nutrition information, do not be concerned if you are not affiliated with an organization. Above all, reporters want facts from a reliable source.

## Letters to the editor and op-ed articles

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Sometimes, the best way to convey your message is to DIY—do it yourself.

Writing a letter to the editor or an “op-ed” article is an excellent way to make your point in your words. Here are general guidelines for writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed.

### Letter to the editor

- Address the letter “To the Editor.” Letters should be exclusive to this publication, timely, no longer than 150 words and must include the writer’s address and phone numbers. You should also be sure to mention that you are a registered dietitian, either in your signature or in the body of your letter. This will lend additional credibility to your argument.
- For most publications, you may send the letter by e-mail, fax or regular mail. Publications generally do not return or acknowledge unpublished letters. If your letter is selected for publication, you probably will be notified beforehand. Publications reserve the right to edit or shorten a letter for space requirements.
- Many worthy letters never see print, and those that do cannot reflect all the topics of interest to readers. Far-reaching publications such as the *New York Times* receive at least 1,000 submissions a day or more. Most publications print an average of 10 letters a day.

That means the competition is intense. So, when conveying your message to the editor, make it clear, current, concise and compelling.

## **Op-ed article**

“Op-ed” is journalism slang for “opposite the editorial page,” which is where a newspaper states its position on important issues of the day. Most newspapers also publish one-time articles as well as regular columns from contributors on newsworthy topics. They look for a variety of viewpoints from authors, including those that do not necessarily agree with the paper’s stance.

As your community’s food and nutrition expert, who is more qualified than you to speak on issues like obesity, school meals, dietary supplements, fad diets or any other newsworthy topic related to what we eat? The answer of course is “no one”—which is why you should consider contributing op-ed articles to your local media or becoming a regular contributing columnist.

Newspapers usually publish their guidelines for op-ed articles either on the editorial or op-ed page, or you can call the paper and ask for a copy. Generally, op-ed articles are longer than letters to the editor—about 500 to 750 words.

While a letter to the editor speaks for itself, an op-ed should be accompanied by a brief letter to the page’s editor (check the masthead for the person’s name or call the publication and ask). Mention that you are speaking as a registered dietitian to lend strength to your argument.

In your article, narrow the focus to one main point supported by no more than three examples. Without being rigid or repetitive, follow the format of “Say what you’re going to say. Say it. Recap what you’ve said.”

Clearly identify a problem that needs addressing, and be positive in recommending a solution.

Be opinionated but reasonable. Have a clear point of view. Keep in mind that as a dietetics professional you are the community’s “voice of reason” when it comes to food, nutrition and health.

## Here's the pitch . . .

Letters and e-mails can be an effective—and relatively nonstressful—way of contacting a reporter or editor, especially for the first time.

Here are some guidelines:

- Never forget: Five “Ws,” an “H” and a “Who cares?”
- Keep it short: A pitch letter or e-mail should be no more than 250 to 300 words (one page of type).
- Get to the point. Reporters and editors receive dozens of pitches and press releases every day. They are good at quickly evaluating an idea for its newsworthiness to their audience.
- Start by telling the reporter or editor that you are offering a story idea. Many editors become impatient with letters that launch into a long narrative without making the purpose clear at the outset.
- If your story idea is tied to an upcoming event, give the editor sufficient notice; generally a week or two, if possible. (You can give too much notice—don’t write or call a newspaper or TV station with an idea for a story that will happen eight months from now.)
- Explain why the editor’s audience would be interested in the story. The question is not how “good” the story is in the abstract, but how much it will appeal to a specific media outlet’s audience.
- Emphasize the scope and importance of the story. Trade and business editors want to know how many companies face the problem or situation addressed in your story—for example, increased demand for healthful items in vending machines. Consumer publications’ editors look for similar indicators.
- Provide colorful details to help the editor get a feel for the story.
- Where possible, suggest alternate approaches to the story. This gives the editor options. (It may also give the editor the flattering feeling that you are deferring to his or her judgment.)
- If you have photos or photo ideas, describe



## Who's calling please?

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Many of the tips for creating a pitch letter or e-mail to the media apply to phone calls as well. Here are some additional tips for phone pitches.

### **Before you pick up the phone**

- Think your message(s) through. What do you want to say? To whom?
- Consider carefully whether your idea meets the criteria for a good media story.
- Timing is everything. If possible, tie your idea to current events, such as industry trends, new legislation or seasonal events.
- Think about how you'd like to see the story written or aired and what the headline or "teaser" would be.
- Anticipate reporters' questions. Prepare (and rehearse) answers.
- Be prepared to offer additional sources of information or interview subjects.
- Familiarize yourself with challenges to your point of view, practices or procedures. "How do you respond to those who say . . . ?"
- Think of real-life examples or case studies that bring your story idea to life, such as a patient to be interviewed or food samples to display on camera.
- Review your media list before calling anyone, to determine the appropriate person to call.
- Be sensitive to deadlines.
- Not every pitch results in a story. Don't take rejection personally—it comes with the territory.
- But don't let "no" prevent you from pitching that reporter on a future story. Let a few weeks go by and try again.
- Practice, practice, practice!



## On the line

- When you get the reporter or editor on the phone—or reach his or her voice mail—give your name and your affiliation. If the reporter answers, ask: “Do you have a minute? I have a story idea that might interest you.”
- If the answer is yes, offer your idea in a sentence or two. Make sure to note immediately why this story is of interest to the editor’s audience.
- He or she probably will reply in one of three ways:
  - ♦ “I’m not interested,” in which case you can ask if there is anyone else at the paper or station who might be (and call them, if so).
  - ♦ “Tell me more,” which means you have the opportunity to “close the sale” with additional information, tie-ins to developments and trends, etc.
  - ♦ “I am interested,” which means you and the editor can now discuss arrangements for an interview or taping.
- If the answer is yes, after you hang up send the reporter or editor a brief follow-up memo, no longer than one page, outlining your pitch and reinforcing why the reporter should cover this story.

## CLARITY OF PURPOSE

**W**hen leaving your name and phone number on a reporter’s voice mail, speak slowly and clearly. Spell your name. Repeat your phone number. Spell all parts of your e-mail address. Give a time when you’ll be

available—and be available at that time. When answering the phone, give your name, even if it’s your home phone. That will save time as the reporter won’t have to ask if you’re Jane Collins and you say yes, etc.

## “For Immediate Release”

.....

A pitch letter (or e-mail or call) is not the only way to alert the media to an upcoming event, program or development. Press releases, press kits and media alerts are some of the effective methods you can use to interest reporters in your story.

### **Press release**

From your media monitoring, you’ve seen that many newspaper stories follow a writing style known as the “pyramid lead.” The most important information in the story is given in the first paragraph or two, and all subsequent paragraphs expand on the main point in decreasing order of importance. Theoretically, you could stop reading at any point after the lead and still know the major point(s) of the story. Structure your press release the same way, using many of the same tips on page 20 for composing a pitch letter.

- Determine the most important information you want to convey and put it high up in the release.
  - Don’t worry about putting everything in the first paragraph. Reporters will read the second and third, too. But don’t count on them to keep reading if you haven’t gotten to the point by now.
  - Help the reporter understand the story by including all important facts.
  - Be concise. Try to keep the length to one page, about 300 words.
  - Write a one- or two-line headline that encapsulates the main point of your release.
  - Use quotations only for interpretation, commentary or observation: “This will be the biggest and best National Nutrition Month® event that Colorado has ever seen,” said registered dietitian and Colorado Dietetic Association President Susan Edwards.
  - Include a contact person’s name, phone number, fax number and e-mail address.
  - Check your spelling. Check it again.
- Sample press releases are included in the Appendix (see page 66).

## **Press kit**

A press kit is something more than a press release or a pitch letter, though it can contain either or both. A press kit, usually a pocket folder or a clipped packet of information, can be used when you want to publicize a significant event with different facets, personalities and potential stories. For example: the events your affiliate or DPG is holding to commemorate National Nutrition Month®.

A press kit might include:

- A cover letter detailing the significance of the upcoming event and your involvement.
- Press release(s) on the activity or announcement.
- Biographies of key speakers.
- Statistics or research related to the subject.
- Photographs or camera-ready artwork such as logos, charts or other graphics.
- Fact sheets or brochures on your organization.
- A list of local or state media representatives or other press contacts and their areas of expertise.
- A business card for your group's media contact.

## **When to send?**

Send your press kit three to four weeks in advance of the event.

## **When to follow up?**

After mailing a press kit, follow up with a phone call about a week after you expect the media should have received it. One or two follow-up calls are recommended. Do not keep calling the reporter if you don't get a response to voice mail messages. If the reporter or editor is not interested in the story, take another look at what you offered. Is there another angle you can try or additional information you could provide?

## **Media advisory**

This is another way to deliver information to the media, usually about a one-time upcoming event such as a press conference, speech or building dedication. Similar in format to a party invitation, a media advisory is never longer than one page, always contains the name of a media

**TIP: Don't get carried away with press kits, especially if the story or event is not highly newsworthy. As with any other media pitch, press kits, no matter how slick or expensive, quickly find their way to the editor's wastebasket if they do not contain solid news ideas.**

contact and is usually constructed in “Who, What, Where . . .” style.

Sample media advisories are included in the Appendix (see page 69).

### **Photography**

Consider photo possibilities for every release or press kit you send and every idea you present to the media. A good photo can often help sell the story—in fact, a newspaper may choose to publish a photo with a descriptive caption rather than run a story.

### **Video news release**

A video news release (known as a VNR) is a sponsored TV news feature story, complete with interviews, narration and secondary or background video (called B-roll). Most range in length from 90 seconds to two minutes. They are distributed via satellite directly to TV newsrooms or shipped via videotape. News producers appreciate video packages that contain the elements they need, while still giving them the freedom to make their own choices and create their own stories. Your messages are often woven into the shots and sound bites, such as comments by the expert (you) or signage.

## **ABOUT PHOTOS**

**W**hen submitting a photo to the media, either by mail, in person or via e-mail, be sure it is in focus and fully illustrates your story idea. The photo should be of the highest quality—have it taken by a professional if at all possible—and should be at least 5x7 inches. Either color or black-and-white is OK.

If you e-mail a photo, send the highest-resolution file you can: at least

300 dots-per-inch. The best formats for publication include .TIF and .EPS, but .JPG is fine, too.

Try to send two photos, one horizontally oriented and one vertical, to give the photo editor more options and improve your odds of publication.

Write and include a clear and informative caption that answers all the W questions and How. Also include a contact name and phone number.

## The interview

.....

You've pitched your idea and the reporter or editor has said "yes." You've provided necessary background information and maybe arranged for accompanying visuals. And now they want to interview . . . you. Good work!

Appearing in the news media can be a rewarding personal and professional experience and can give you a great opportunity to demonstrate to your community that the dietetics professional is the source for the best and most timely food and nutrition information and services.

In this section, you will become familiar with different interview scenarios. You'll learn how to prepare and deliver the most appropriate message to the audience and gain tips that ensure you project a positive and successful image for yourself and for all dietetics professionals.

To conduct a successful media interview, here are some things to know . . .

### **Know your subject**

In any interview, you are the face and voice of the dietetics profession. Know what you are talking about. Keep current in the dietetics field and in your areas of specialty and follow the wider range of health and news stories. What is attracting interest in both popular and professional literature? Among other advantages, this will help you make your points clearly and effectively in interviews—whether or not the reporter asks the right questions.

### **Know your audience**

Who is watching, reading or listening to your words? What are their interests? What is their level of knowledge or expertise?

## **BILL OF RIGHTS**

When being interviewed by the media, you have the right to . . .

- be comfortable.
- have a question repeated if it isn't clear.
- ask the interviewer for more information.
- work in your message(s) even if the interview is getting offtrack
- say you don't know the answer to the question.

## **Know your message**

While the host or reporter may select the general topic, always keep in mind the message(s) you want to convey. Above all else, your primary message is that dietetics professionals are the nutrition experts, the public's best source of food and nutrition information and services. You convey this message by your professionalism, your knowledge of the subject and your concern for the health and well-being of everyone.

That's your "big picture" message. For each individual interview, always come prepared with two or three main points you want to communicate to the audience about the topic.

If you are being interviewed on how parents can deal with children who are picky eaters, your messages might include:

- (1) Keep offering a variety of foods.
- (2) Encourage your child to try new foods, but don't worry if he or she refuses to eat them at every meal.
- (3) Kids will eat when hungry and will get the nutrition they need when a variety of foods are offered.

## **Know your interviewer**

Through your media monitoring, you've read or watched the interviewer's work. For TV or radio, what approach does he or she have—chatty, all-business, folksy, intense? What types of question does this person ask? What topics interest him or her? Pay attention to how the interviewer acts and you'll get an idea what to expect when it's your turn.

## **Know what the interviewer wants and needs from you**

If possible, chat with the reporter in advance. Make sure both of you understand what is expected and what you will be prepared to discuss. Send background information ahead of time and bring a copy with you to the studio so either of you can refer to it if needed. If the interview will be with a print reporter, ask if a photographer will be there. If so, talk about possible photos in advance and prepare other people or locations to be photographed.

## **Follow up and follow through**

Within a day or two of speaking with a reporter who is interested in your story, you should . . .

- follow through if the reporter asks for additional information.
- find and send the reporter the answers to any questions you couldn't answer in your original conversation.
- without pressuring or pestering, keep in touch during the time the reporter is considering or working on your story.

## **Don't expect to be . . .**

- told exactly when or how the media might use your story.
- allowed—so don't ask—to see the story in advance or approve your quotations. As a rule, the media do not allow subjects of stories to review and approve stories and may react negatively to being asked.

## **Express your appreciation**

Let reporters know you appreciate their work. Especially if you are pleased with the results of a story idea you presented, send a note or e-mail telling the reporter he or she did a good job. Remember, you are not thanking the reporter for doing you a favor. This is still a business relationship and the reporter undoubtedly chose the story on its merit. You are expressing your appreciation for a job well done.

**TIP: SIX Cs**

You'll express yourself best if you keep these "Six Cs" in mind.

Be . . .

- Clear
- Candid
- Concise
- Conversational
- Correct
- Compassionate

**TIP: Practice with a stopwatch and discover how much you can say in 20 seconds . . . it's more than you'd think. Fill each of those seconds with solid information and you'll have a productive interview.**

## Interviewing tips and advice

This section contains practical tips and advice on conducting a news media interview. Many of the principles are the same, whether it's for TV, radio or print. But each type of media has different needs and offers different opportunities for you to convey your messages of good nutrition and health for everyone. In any interview, you should . . .

- **Be prepared.** Being interviewed takes preparation and thought on your part. The best interviews seem casual and spontaneous, but that is because a lot of work has gone into getting ready beforehand. The more you prepare, the more confident and at-ease you will feel and the more effective you are likely to be.
- Spend time before the interview **thinking** about brief and bright ways to express your messages. Anticipate questions. Rehearse responses out loud and in front of a mirror. But don't over-rehearse to the point where you sound like you're reading from a script.
- **Listen** to the question.
- Limit messages to **three key points**. Studies have shown that most people can process three items with good retention.
- Keep your **sentences short**—no more than about 25 words, if possible. And keep the length of each "sound bite" to 10 to 20 seconds—that's about all the time you'll get anyway.
- **Visualize** one person (real or imaginary) whom you most want to know and understand what you're saying in the interview and "speak" to that person.
- **Match** your message to the audience. A "media pro" thinks about the audience, while the amateur thinks about the topic.
- **Tell the truth.** Always. Don't mislead or lie. Maintain professional ethics at all times. Don't evade questions. Be direct.
- **Avoid exaggeration** or speculation. Stick to the facts.
- Make your point **clearly, concisely and completely**, then stop talking and wait for the next question. Don't feel the need to keep talking just to fill dead air.



- Use **anecdotes** and personal experiences to lend context or “color” to your main points.
- Get the **important facts out first**, especially in a live broadcast interview. Don’t assume the reporter will eventually get around to asking why you’re there.
- Assume **anything you say** can and will be used in the story. To avoid misunderstandings, especially in print or taped interviews, assume there is no such thing as “off the record.” A general rule of thumb: Don’t say anything to a reporter that you would not want to read in tomorrow’s paper.
- **Keep cool**, even if the interview strays off topic or seems like it’s becoming confrontational. (This won’t happen often, but it can.) Maintain a professional, businesslike attitude. Sometimes reporters believe an antagonistic tone will get a more spontaneous, unrehearsed response. Don’t be intimidated. Don’t argue. Don’t lose your composure.

## GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

### DO

- Identify yourself properly.
- Cite credible sources, such as the most current research.
- Cite documentable facts, not opinion.
- Become familiar with ADA’s position statements, client education materials, *Nutrition Fact Sheets* and other materials.
- Reference ADA’s official position statements when appropriate.
- Clearly distinguish your own opinions from ADA’s position statements.
- Speak in general, category-wide terms, instead of offering name brands: low-fat dressings, energy drinks, high-protein diets. If you name products, list several to illustrate your point.
- Use educational tools such as MyPyramid.gov or Nutrition Facts Panel.

### DON’T

- Fake it if you don’t know the answer. (It’s OK to say “I don’t know.”)
- Be afraid to pause and think of the best answer to a question.
- Make statements you can’t back up with documentable facts.
- Guess at another party’s motives. (“Why would that diet book author say such a thing?”)
- Say anything “off the record.” (Assume the reporter is writing down everything you say.)
- Endorse or criticize a particular product, manufacturer, author, etc., or discredit things like school lunches or hospital food.
- Volunteer product names.
- Hound reporters.
- Discuss specific salaries of dietetics professionals. Use ranges.



## Tools of the trade

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Whether you are a newcomer to media interviews or have spent years before the cameras and on the phone with reporters, there are three time-tested techniques for conducting an informative interview that will convey your key messages. Practice all of them . . . and monitor interview shows on TV and radio to see how often and how effectively they are used.

### Hooking

This sets up a question that you want to be asked, leading the interviewer in a direction you want to go.

**You:** Of course, cholesterol in the diet is important, but so are several other types of fats in foods. **(Stop talking.)**

**Interviewer:** What other types of fats do you mean?

### Bridging

This is one of the most important techniques in guiding an interview. It helps you transition smoothly from an off-topic question back to your subject. First, answer the initial question briefly and completely, then convey your message.

**Interviewer (during a segment that's supposed to be on the advantages of eating a balanced diet):** Don't bottles of dietary supplements have to list all the ingredients they contain?

**You:** Yes, the Food and Drug Administration requires it. However, the best way to get all the nutrients you need is from a balanced diet of nutritious food.

### Flagging

This is a way of calling extra attention to your key messages, helping the audience "take home" what you want them to remember from this interview.

"The important thing to think about is . . ."

"What parents really need to remember when packing a school lunch is . . ."

**TIP:** Studies have shown that, unless you use effective communications techniques, the content of your message will never reach its intended audience. Presentation is 90 percent of retention and substance is 10 percent.

## Read all about it: The print interview

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Coverage in the print media—newspapers, magazines and the Internet—provides you and your organization with instant credibility and is your most readily accessible publicity outlet.

In a print interview, conversations with reporters will be edited and condensed for inclusion in an article. You will say a lot and be quoted a little. All the more reason to practice your key messages so they do not get lost in the flood of information.

Stay close to your messages—your “mental agenda”—and don’t ramble. The more concise your answers, the better your odds of being quoted in the article . . . not to mention the less chance you have of being misquoted.

**TIPS:** While being brief and concise, don’t pass up the opportunity to fully explain what you are talking about, especially if you can translate technical terms or complex ideas into easily understood lay language.

Be courteous and friendly, including at the end of the interview.

Watch out for off-the-cuff remarks (don’t make them!).

Follow up on all information requests quickly.

### **Tailor your message to the medium**

For maximum impact, learn to identify various types of print media and tailor your message and style to them.

#### **Newspapers**

Reporters for newspapers are seeking new developments fresh angles and are usually on deadline. Lead time for story ideas is one to three weeks. Newspapers are interested in stories that can be illustrated with photos and charts.

#### **Magazines**

These publications go into more detail on contemporary nutrition topics and have longer lead times and earlier deadlines than newspapers. Stories include first-person accounts, charts, graphs and high-quality photography. Contact the assignment and managing editors, feature writers and food editors.

#### **Newsletters**

These publications are interested in hot topics and food trends from a popular perspective. They generally require about three months lead time for a story pitch. Contact the editor.



# Lights, camera, action: The television interview

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Learn to identify the formats used for TV programming and tailor your message to the appropriate show.

## News

Newscasts often are a TV station's most-watched programs. A station chooses stories for its news programs based on timeliness, visual impact, local interest and ties to national and world news. Many newscasts set aside time each day for health stories. Mid-day and afternoon newscasts tend to air more features and health-related stories than the later evening shows.

**TIP:** If you're invited to appear on a news segment or talk show, enhance your effectiveness by providing visuals—foods or packages, labels, measuring cups and spoons, models, charts, etc. Arrange this ahead of time with the producer or host.

## Talk shows

Unlike news programs, talk shows tend to plan programs and book guests days or weeks in advance. Guests on talk shows generally are people who have interesting personalities, do notable things or have interesting things happen to them.

## News and feature magazine programs

The models for these types of programs are the "Today" show, "Dateline" and "Good Morning America." Many local stations have their own equivalents. This format combines news and features, with segments lasting four to six minutes.

## Consumer-interest programs and segments

These are one-to-five-minute spots, often aired during newscasts, that feature a brief discussion of current topics.

## PASS THE AUDITION

If and when you reach the producer or host on the phone to discuss your story idea, know that this conversation is also serving as your audition to appear on the show. The producer wants to hear

that you are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, articulate and personable and that you can make your point clearly, effectively and briefly. You'll need to pass this audition to be invited on the air.

## Public service announcements

Known as PSAs, these are taped segments, 10 to 60 seconds in length, that are educational in nature.

## Public affairs programming

These shows are usually taped and air late at night, on weekends or other off-hours. They are designed to inform and educate the local community or provide a service. These shows are usually 30 to 60 minutes long and consist of one or more segments.

**TIP:** Your affiliate association might work with a local station to develop a PSA for airing during National Nutrition Month®. Contact the station at least two or three months in advance.

## DRESS FOR TV SUCCESS

**H**ere are tips for making the best impression on TV:

- Choose clothing that is comfortable and professional-looking.
- Jackets, blazers or suit coats always look professional and they give you a place to clip a microphone.
- Wear long sleeves. They appear more professional than short sleeves.
- Wear solid colors. They appear more powerful and authoritative than plaids, stripes or large print designs. Wear these only as accents.
- Men, wear dark suits with conservative print or solid color ties. Avoid suits with stripes or large checks.
- Women, wear heavier makeup than usual, including powder to avoid shine.
- Comb your hair away from your face and use hairspray to avoid flying stray hairs.
- Avoid large jewelry or pins and dangling earrings.
- Wear natural hosiery.
- Simple necklines look better than cluttered ones.
- Some experts believe pink, rose, light blue and aquamarine are the best colors for women to wear on TV.
- White can look washed out in bright TV lights.
- Women, if you will be seated and your whole body will show, wear a skirt that covers your knees.
- If in doubt, ask in advance.

## Being interviewed on TV

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Television interviews are different in many respects from print and radio interviews. Here are some ideas for being interviewed successfully on a TV news or talk program.

**TIP:** Find out in advance where to park. If the station is in a metropolitan area, parking may be limited.

### Before airtime

The producer or host will give you a time to arrive at the studio. **Do not be late.** In fact, arrive early. Both you and the host will be more relaxed if there is no frantic, last-minute rush. If you will be using props, they may ask you to come by the day before to help set up and walk through your segment.

Talk with the producer and, if possible, the host. Agree one last time on the two or three main messages you plan to deliver.

Provide contact information such as phone numbers, street and e-mail addresses and Web sites ahead of time so it can appear on screen.

Make it clear how you want to be identified. For example: David Williams, registered dietitian, Michigan Dietetic Association. Provide your business card or write it out.

Relax. Have fun.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

### DO . . .

- Keep your composure.
- Focus on **your** objective.
- Use hooking, flagging and bridging techniques to get across your messages.
- Reiterate each message two or three times to be sure key points get across. Better to bore the interviewer than to stray into uncharted waters.
- Use facts and figures to bolster your case, but don't get bogged down in statistics. Anecdotes and practical, real-world examples grab and keep the audience's attention.
- Win over the audience by your attitude and by your answers.
- Be friendly and natural. Your face should be expressive. Smile!

### DON'T . . .

- Repeat a negative question or phrase ("Aren't fad diets just terrible?") as part of your answer. Accentuate the positive.
- Nod your head while the reporter is speaking, especially if the question is negative. You may be doing it to show you're listening, but it can look like you're agreeing with what the reporter is saying.
- Leave it up to the reporter to make sure your intended messages are covered in the interview.
- Be a statue. It's OK to be animated.



## **A three-way exchange**

A TV interview has three participants: the host, the guest and the viewing audience. Keep in mind that many people watch television alone—envision the audience as one person you most want to reach with your messages and speak like you're talking to that person, not to thousands of viewers.

## **As you begin the interview . . .**

- Address the interviewer by his or her first name.
- Listen carefully to the entire question before answering.
- Wait for the question to end and pause briefly to collect your thoughts.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Be personable and professional.
- Stick to the subject.
- Finish your answer and stop talking.

## **Plain speaking**

Use everyday language that is easily understood. Keep scientific jargon to an absolute minimum. Define any terms the average eighth-grader wouldn't immediately understand.

Avoid science terms like "efficacy," "satiety," "paradigm" or "parenteral." Most people do not know what these words mean. Instead of "efficacy," say "effectiveness." Instead of "satiety," say "feeling of fullness."

Try to avoid abbreviations and acronyms, since many people don't know what they mean either. At least on first reference, say "registered dietitian" instead of "RD," and "dietetic technician, registered" instead of "DTR." Say "Department of Health and Human Services" instead of "HHS" and "National Institutes of Health" instead of "NIH."

If you have to use an abbreviation or acronym, say what it means. Exceptions include common acronyms like AIDS.

Make your point with short words and short sentences. It can be done: Lincoln's Gettysburg Address contains fewer than 300 words in 40 sentences, totaling only about 400 syllables.

**TIP: Remember that an interview is not the same as a casual conversation with an old friend. Use appropriate language for the situation. What goes for the local radio "morning zoo" program probably is not OK for your town's PBS station. Use humor sparingly and cautiously; you never know who might take it the wrong way.**

## Looking good

On television, appearance matters. A reassuring professional demeanor helps viewers focus on the substance of your interview.

- **Have a seat:** Your chair should be placed at a 45-degree angle to the interviewer's. This allows you to lean slightly to one side, resting your elbow on the armrest and freeing your hands for gesturing (and not for clutching the armrest). Don't swivel or shift.
- **Look relaxed and interested:** Lean forward slightly—about a 10-degree angle. This shows you're interested in both the subject and the interviewer. If you are wearing a jacket, unbutton it and sit on the bottom to hold it firmly in place.
- **Posture:** Sit or stand up straight. Try not to fidget or rock back and forth on your feet.
- **Gestures:** Except for wild waving, gestures are useful and illustrate your words. They can also help you look (and feel) relaxed. Just keep your hands below your face.
- **Stuck in the middle:** Try not to stand or sit between two interviewers, so you won't have to turn from side to side.
- **"Finishing school":** Use this position for your legs, crossing them at the ankles. Space permitting, you can cross your legs at the knee. Don't bounce your foot and don't uncross and recross your legs.
- **The eyes tell all:** The audience unconsciously will be studying your eyes in search of sincerity, confidence, enthusiasm and credibility. To make sure you appear interested and attentive, maintain eye contact with the interviewer at virtually all times—when you're not reaching for a prop, looking at another guest while he or she is talking, etc.
- **The camera never blinks:** You never know when the camera is on you: Assume it always is.
- **Keep your focus:** Ignore everything that is happening outside camera range, such as stagehands walking around or the host and producer using hand signals while you're talking. This is normal for a show in progress.
- **Stay put:** After the interview is over, you may still be on camera for a few moments. Do not get up, walk away, unclip your microphone, etc. **Wait** until someone gives you the all-clear.

## Sound advice: The radio interview

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Radio is a terrific medium in which to get your message across. Radio typically allows for more time than television, while still offering you the opportunity to verbally illustrate your points or “paint a word picture.” In addition, studies have shown that the audience’s retention of information is higher on radio than television.

**TIP:** Listeners tend to remember the first thing that is said in a radio interview, not the last. The first 85 words you say are most likely what will be included in a “hard” news story if it’s taped. Rehearse!

### Advantages of a radio interview

- You can bring notes and arrange them in front of you for easy reference.
- It doesn’t matter (as much) how you’re dressed.
- Radio interviews can be and often are conducted over the telephone, so you can do the interview from your home or office.

### Constantly seeking topics—and experts to talk about them

Radio stations have a constant need for timely, interesting and controversial topics. Food and nutrition fit all those categories. Listen to successful radio shows to determine how they work in getting messages across. Learn to identify the five formats used for radio programming and tailor your message and style to the medium.

## GETTING ON THE AIR

**H**ere are tips for researching, pitching a story or interview for the radio:

- Through media monitoring and research, learn about your local stations, programs and hosts.
- Pay attention to shows that have specialized target audiences (commuters, stay-at-home parents, teens).
- Send a business or Rolodex card with your name, professional credentials, place of employment and title, telephone, e-mail and two or three areas of expertise. This is a good way

to be put in the station’s file of expert contacts for future stories.

- When you find one or more programs that are appropriate for food and nutrition stories, send a pitch letter or e-mail to the news assignment editor, the talk/call-in show producer (or host) or the public affairs director.
- Provide examples of specific newsworthy nutrition topics that you could discuss. Emphasize your expertise and what you can offer their listeners. Express your availability and interest in being of assistance.

**TIPS:** On a call-in show, try to keep the discussion on target, but be flexible enough to handle a variety of questions from callers.

While the audience for public affairs programs is usually smaller than during peak listenership hours, guests generally are given more time to discuss a topic in greater detail.

Use an appearance on a relatively low-pressure public affairs show as practice for future interviews on other shows.

## **News**

Most radio news stories are 30 to 60 seconds in length. Generally, a “hard” news item covers events, discoveries or research. Their function is to inform the listener about current information in a timely manner. When interviewed for a radio news story, remember to address the issues from the public’s point of view and keep it brief and simple.

## **Talk show**

These shows discuss topics of broad interest, in segments of 10 to 60 minutes, in a way that informs and entertains the listeners. The show may be live or taped. Talk shows tend to be driven by the host’s personality and style. The host is usually well-informed and opinionated and should be included in the discussion.

## **Call-in show**

This format generally provides the longest time slot for an interview and discussion of a topic—30 minutes to two hours. These shows generally deal with consumer information in an entertaining manner. Guests are generally booked one to four weeks in advance.

## **Public affairs program**

These shows and segments may be 10, 30 or 60 minutes in length and usually air on Sundays or off-hours. Functions of this format are to inform, educate or provide a service. The show may be live but most often is taped.

## **HANDLING HOSTS AND OTHER GUESTS**

**U**se the host’s first name and don’t be afraid to ask her or him a question or challenge an assertion. You can never be completely in control of the discussion, but using the techniques of hooking, bridging and flagging will help you direct the conversation, allowing all important points to be covered in the time slot.

If there will be other guests, learn the

credentials, place of employment, areas of interest and expertise and published works of these individuals.

Until you have become skilled at rebuttal with experts such as authors or official spokespeople, pass up the opportunity to be scheduled head-to-head on a controversial topic. Consider referring the reporter to a dietetics professional with more experience.

## Editorial or rebuttal

Many radio stations broadcast editorial commentary from management on current topics in the news and offer individuals airtime to respond. These broadcasts are usually 30 to 60 seconds long and are taped for later airing.

## Coordinate your ideas

Support efforts of a nationally newsworthy consumer education program such as National Nutrition Month®, *Home Food Safety . . . It's in Your Hands™*, National Cancer Institute's 5-A-Day for Better Health and many others.

**TIP:** Listen for editorials that pertain to health and nutrition or for which you or your organization can offer knowledgeable commentary. Stick to a single issue.

## NOT JUST A STORY IDEA . . .

If you discover through your media monitoring that none of the radio stations in your area offer nutrition-related programming, consider proposing just such a show or a series of features and segments. You already know where to find the expert guests!

Radio-show producers and/or hosts select the topics for the program, but many may be receptive to creative programming ideas. Suggest a series, such as clearing up the confusion on fats. Remember that your success depends on meeting the needs of the radio-show producer, host and the listening audience.

Call the station's marketing department and ask for the station's

demographics or the age range of listeners, overall and for different times of the day. These can vary from show to show and hour to hour. Which shows might air a nutrition segment? What nutrition issues interest a particular show's listeners? Target your idea to the listeners.

When preparing your proposal, develop a variety of creative programs in four areas:

- Hard news
- Consumer interest
- Public affairs
- Special events

Offer a number of alternative ideas to give producers and hosts the widest possible choice.

**TIP: Give your conclusion first, then support it with facts, examples and statistics.**

## Being interviewed on radio

Radio hosts usually are prepared for interviews, with a knowledge base of the subject to be discussed. (That is not always the case, however; some nationally known talk-show hosts are famous for not doing any research on their interview subjects before airtime.) But this knowledge base may not be accurate, as the host may have strong opinions about specific topics—radio interviews can be more confrontational and prone to go off into other directions than TV or print media.

If there is anyone in the studio who has prepared for the interview, make sure it is . . . **you.**

Rehearse possible questions and answers before going on—but again, try not to sound overly scripted.

### What a voice!

On radio, your voice is the consumer's only connection to you and your messages. The quality of your voice is a critical aspect of gaining the radio audience's attention. Help the listener get your message:

- Sit or stand close to the microphone. Ask for help if you need the mike to be adjusted.
- Use a pleasant tone that conveys interest, enthusiasm and energy.
- Vary your tone, pitch and pace. Don't speak too quickly.
- A lower voice tone sounds more authoritative than a high-pitched tone.
- Use short pauses or inflection to help illustrate your points.

### In the studio

- Bring notes containing your messages and main talking points on index cards, not a notebook or pieces of paper, which can be noisy. Write large, so you can read your notes easily.
- Avoid wearing noisy jewelry.
- Don't touch any equipment.

### The listener and you

Radio is the most conversational news format. Talk to the listeners, not at them. As with TV, imagine you are talking to one listener at a time.

Speak in personal terms. Call the host and callers by their first names. As with TV, keep your answers brief—10 to 20 seconds—and use words that are easily understood by anyone.

### **Grab the reins**

If you are on a call-in show, don't let the callers monopolize the show (and don't count on the host to rein them in, either). Address the caller's point, no matter how off-topic, then bridge back quickly and smoothly to your messages. But don't make it sound as if you're reading from a press release.

Be specific and provide examples and facts to back up your claims. Do not be defensive or sound overly opinionated—but stand your ground.

### **On the phone**

If you are being interviewed by phone, use a private office and ensure beforehand there will be no interruptions. Disable call waiting. Take other phones off the hook. Turn off the radio in your office and the sound on your computer. Never use a speaker phone. Stand up during the interview so you don't get sluggish. Ask in advance whether the interview will be live or taped. Even if it's live, assume the interview might be taped for later editing and repeat airing.

### **The end**

After the host has ended a phone interview, remain on the line for an all-clear signal. This will keep you from sounding as though you are in a hurry to end the conversation.

## “TEN COMMANDMENTS OF PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION”

**1** Know your audience. Who is tuning in? What is their level of knowledge? What do you want them to know or do?

**2** Know your message. Have a single key point. Repeat. Reinforce. Personalize. Be definitive. Avoid “I think . . . I feel . . . I believe . . .” Don’t stray from the subject.

**3** Anticipate all questions. Consider issues and determine answers before you speak. Don’t be caught off-guard.

**4** Avoid jargon. Don’t use words or phrases that may be confusing or hard to understand. Avoid acronyms and clichés.

**5** Use physical animation. Voice and body work together. Use physical movement to enhance your vocal delivery. Scan the room. Maintain high energy.

**6** Don’t repeat negative phrases. Rephrase questions to reinforce what your company is doing to enhance its image in the marketplace.

**7** Keep your cool. Respond rationally to emotion. Don’t get flustered or defensive.

**8** Speak only for your affiliate group. Don’t talk about other groups’ policies or philosophies. Concentrate on your own position.

**9** Avoid “no comment” or “off the record.” Be careful of phrases like “Between you and me,” or “I shouldn’t say this, but . . .” If you say it, expect that it will be remembered.

**10** Tell the truth. Honesty enhances believability.

*Source: The Speaking Specialists*



## Going forward: Working with the media

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Congratulations! You've successfully conducted an interview with a print or broadcast reporter. But your job isn't finished. Here are some guidelines for ongoing contact with the news media.

### When reporters call you

After you have successfully worked with a reporter, editor or producer on one or more stories that you've pitched, you may start receiving unsolicited calls from the media, seeking your expertise on food and nutrition stories. Good going! This is solid recognition of you as a credible, "consumer-friendly" source for the media.

Taking a call from the media—on a story of the reporter's choosing—is different from an interview that results from a story you have pitched. For one thing, the process is substantially speeded up. Instead of spending days, weeks or months arranging a story, you will probably be asked for your comments right then and there.

### Handling on-the-spot media calls

Trust yourself, your training and your experience. As a dietetics professional, you will be able to answer the vast majority of reporters' questions on food and nutrition topics, either from memory or with minimal research.

## TRACK YOUR MEDIA COVERAGE

**C**lip and save all newspaper coverage you obtain for your organization or affiliate and arrange to tape radio and TV coverage. (Professional taping services will make you copies for a fee, but it's usually easier and cheaper to do it yourself.) To illustrate the work you are doing, keep copies of all materials and information that you develop for the

media and take your own photos of special events.

Share information about what works and what doesn't with your fellow ADA members, especially those who work with the media or are considering it. You will maximize the effectiveness of your own efforts and pick up many new ideas in the process.

## Harder questions

Less frequently, the questions can be difficult, require more information than you have on hand or involve company policy or actions. Here are tips on handling these situations:

- Even if the reporter's deadline is right now, don't feel pressured into answering a question or providing a comment this very second. Some reporters might tell you that you must comment immediately because of deadline pressures, but you don't have to.
- Remember, it is very difficult to correct a problem caused by a hasty or ill-timed remark once it appears in print or on TV.
- It is fine for you to take a few minutes to research information or collect your thoughts. Tell the reporter you are happy to help, find out his or her deadline and say you'll call back in a few minutes.
- Do some quick research on the Internet, in a reference book or in a professional journal.
- Discuss the question with a colleague, your state media representative, affiliate public relations chair or ADA's Public Relations Team.
- Write down some thoughts on a notepad or on your computer screen and refer to them when you call back.
- Call back within the time you promised, even if it's to say that you are still researching the information.
- If the reporter needs additional facts or information, offer to provide it. Do so immediately, via e-mail, fax or overnight delivery.

## "I'M ON DEADLINE"

**R**eporters and editors work minute-to-minute. Yesterday is gone and tomorrow is too far away to think about. The vast majority of the time, when a reporter calls you, he or she needs your help now. Be sensitive to this fact of journalistic life. If a reporter calls you, return the call promptly—within an hour. Ask without being told: "What is your deadline?" The reporter will appreciate it. If the reporter's deadline

is now, you can serve as a resource in one of two ways:

- Answer the reporter's questions on the spot. Your education and experience should enable you to respond to most nutrition-related media questions without needing to do additional research.
- Refer the reporter to an appropriate expert—a colleague or another health professional.

## Take a message

- Alert everyone who works with you—receptionist, colleague, assistant—that you are working with the media. Make sure anyone who takes messages for you knows how to handle a call from a reporter.
- Write down the reporter's full name and media outlet. Don't hesitate to ask the reporter to repeat or spell them. This also demonstrates your interest in getting the facts straight and being helpful.
- Write down the nature of the call: What is the specific subject of the story or question(s) the reporter needs answered? The message must convey the information the reporter seeks. Ask questions, if needed. But don't press the reporter if he or she doesn't want to discuss specifics just yet.
- Write down the time of the call.
- What is the best way to make return contact? Phone number(s)? E-mail?
- When is the deadline for a reply? Make sure the person who is taking your messages notifies you immediately—via pager or cell phone, interrupt a meeting—if you've received a reporter's call.

**TIP:** You, or whoever is taking messages for you, *must* find out if the reporter is working on deadline. This deadline can be in five minutes or it can be in several weeks. *Ask.* If you do not respond to a reporter's request in time, you may miss the opportunity to get good publicity now and hamper your dealings with this reporter who may be less likely to call you in the future.

## Story ideas and resources: ADA is here to help

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The full resources of the American Dietetic Association are at your disposal in finding and developing story ideas for your use in promoting dietetics professionals in the news media. Virtually all the resources you'll need can be found at ADA's Web site, **www.eatright.org**. ADA's Web site is constantly being updated and enhanced with new information and resources, so visit often.

### **Media section**

Produced by ADA's Public Relations Team, this section is designed to be particularly valuable to reporters and to dietetics professionals who work with the media. Check for press releases and kits; lists of resources; information on current consumer education programs such as *Home Food Safety . . . It's in Your Hands*<sup>TM</sup> (**www.homefoodsafety.org**); past consumer nutrition campaigns; downloadable logos and much more.

### **Journal of the American Dietetic Association**

The *Journal* is the most widely read, peer-reviewed periodical in the dietetics field. Articles published in the *Journal* regularly are reported by the media. The entire *Journal* is now available online to ADA members at [www.adajournal.org](http://www.adajournal.org). The table of contents and selected articles are accessible by the public and media. ADA's Public Relations Team makes articles available to the media on request.

### **Position statements**

ADA's position statements reflect the Association's official stance on issues affecting the nutrition and health status of the public.

Consult position statements and refer to them in your interviews as appropriate to lend additional credibility to your comments. Position statements are at **www.eatright.org**.

See page 72 for an article from the November 1997 *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* on using ADA positions in your work.

## Knowledge Center

The Knowledge Center at [www.eatright.org/knowledgecenter](http://www.eatright.org/knowledgecenter) contains information on ADA books, National Nutrition Month®, Good Nutrition Reading List and other consumer and professional nutrition resources.

## ADA CONSUMER PUBLICATIONS

- 365 Days of Healthy Eating from the American Dietetic Association*  
R. Larson Duyff, MS, RD, FADA, CFCS  
Wiley
- American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide (2nd ed.)*  
R. Larson Duyff, MS, RD, FADA, CFCS  
Wiley
- American Dietetic Association Guide to Better Digestion*  
L. Bonci, MPH, RD  
Wiley
- American Dietetic Association Guide to Eating Right When You Have Diabetes*  
M. Powers, MS, RD, CDE  
Wiley
- American Dietetic Association Guide to Healthy Eating for Kids*  
J. Shield, MEd, RD,  
M. Mullen, MS, RD  
Wiley
- Cooking Healthy across America*  
Food and Culinary Professionals  
Dietetic Practice Group of the American Dietetic Association  
Wiley
- DiETING for Dummies (2nd ed.)*  
J. Kirby, RD (for the American Dietetic Association)  
IDG Books
- The Healthy Beef Cookbook Steaks, Salads, Stir-Fry and More*  
American Dietetic Association  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
R. Chamberlain, B. Hornick, MS, RD  
Wiley (October 2005)
- American Dietetic Association Nutrition Now Series*  
—*Being Vegetarian*  
—*Calcium in Your Life*  
—*Carbohydrates: What You Need to Know*  
—*Monthly Nutrition Companion*  
—*Pregnancy Nutrition: Good Health for You and Your Baby*  
—*Snacking Habits for Healthy Living*  
—*Vitamins, Minerals and Dietary Supplements*  
Wiley
- The Pocket Supermarket Guide (3rd ed.)*  
M. Abbott Hess, MS, RD, FADA  
American Dietetic Association
- The Way to Eat*  
D. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPL,  
M. Gonzalez, MS, RD  
Sourcebooks

## STAY CURRENT WITH THE WEB

This is just a sampling of the hundreds of Web sites that contain the latest general, health and nutrition news. Along with ADA's own [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) and [www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org), add these to your Web browser's list of bookmarks and visit frequently for updates. All of these sites are free, but some may require registration.

### General news

[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)  
[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)  
[www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com)  
[www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com)  
[www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com)  
[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)  
[www.boston.com/globe](http://www.boston.com/globe)  
[www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com)  
[www.wire.ap.org](http://www.wire.ap.org)  
[www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com)  
[www.news.npr.org](http://www.news.npr.org)  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

### Health, science, food and nutrition news

[www.eurekalert.com](http://www.eurekalert.com)  
[www.reutershealth.com](http://www.reutershealth.com)  
[www.worldhealthnews.harvard.edu](http://www.worldhealthnews.harvard.edu)  
[www.healthscout.com](http://www.healthscout.com)  
[www.tv.com](http://www.tv.com)  
[www.foodshow.com](http://www.foodshow.com)  
<http://navigator.tufts.edu>  
[www.healthology.com](http://www.healthology.com)

### Government sites

[www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)  
<http://myPyramid.gov>  
[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)  
(contains links to National Cancer Institute, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, many others)  
[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)  
[www.nas.edu](http://www.nas.edu)

### Professional associations

[www.nejm.com](http://www.nejm.com)  
[www.faseb.org](http://www.faseb.org)  
[www.bmj.com](http://www.bmj.com)  
[www.amhrt.org](http://www.amhrt.org)  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)  
[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)  
[www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

## Appendix

### **Wanted: State Media Representatives, PR Chairs, Spokespeople**

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As has been mentioned previously in this guide, the best advocate for the American Dietetic Association and the entire profession is you, the dietetics professional and member of ADA. Working with the news media to advance the dietetics profession in the eyes of the public is, as we hope you will find, a rewarding experience.

Consider becoming even more involved in obtaining publicity for ADA and your profession at the affiliate and national levels. Every state dietetic association has one or more state media representatives and PR chairs. Contact your affiliate president to learn how you can put your interest and training in media relations to use for your Association and profession.

In addition, ADA trains and coordinates the work of a nationwide network of Spokespeople based in the country's largest media markets.

All ADA members who live or work in (or near) a large media market are encouraged to apply to become part of the Spokesperson program. For more information—including a list of open markets, or for an application—visit

**[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)** or e-mail  
**[media@eatright.org](mailto:media@eatright.org)**. Good luck!

## Key ADA messages

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The following are some key American Dietetic Association facts and messages for use in your media interviews and materials.

### **Consumer nutrition advice**

ADA's healthful eating messages to the public emphasize the total diet or overall pattern of food eaten, rather than any one food or meal.

ADA believes there are no "good" foods or "bad" foods. If foods are consumed in moderation, in appropriate portion sizes and combined with regular physical activity, it is ADA's position that all foods can fit into a healthful diet.

There is no "magic bullet" for safe and healthful weight management. Successful weight management is a lifelong process. It means adopting a lifestyle that includes a healthful eating plan, coupled with regular physical activity.

People are not all alike and one size does not fit all when it comes to planning and achieving a healthful diet. What may be the best approach for one person may not be the answer for another. A dietetics professional is best qualified to help devise an eating plan that is right for each individual.

ADA believes the base of most healthy people's eating plans should be fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat protein.

### **Obesity**

Obesity is a complex disease and presents a number of challenging issues. Through their training and expertise, dietetics professionals are well positioned to play a major role in addressing the obesity epidemic.

### **Children's nutrition**

Nutrition profoundly affects children's ability to learn, develop and stay healthy. ADA believes there is no better time than the early years to make an impact on the lifelong eating and exercise habits that contribute to health maintenance and disease prevention.

Parental involvement is a key component of children's nutrition. Parents can teach their children about healthy foods, practice what they teach and make sure that physical activity is incorporated into each day.

### **Medical nutrition therapy**

Medical nutrition therapy, provided by registered dietitians as part of a person's health-care team, has been proven effective in treatment and prevention of nutrition-related diseases and conditions. Patients receiving medical nutrition therapy or MNT, have been shown to have fewer complications, fewer hospitalizations and lower health-care costs.



## **“The 10 Red Flags of Junk Science”**

With several other health professional organizations, the American Dietetic Association is a member of the Food and Nutrition Science Alliance or FANSA. FANSA has compiled a checklist to help consumers evaluate nutrition science and product claims called “The 10 Red Flags of Junk Science.” Watch out for:

- (1) Recommendations that promise a quick fix
- (2) Dire warnings of danger from a single product or regimen
- (3) Claims that sound too good to be true
- (4) Simplistic conclusions drawn from a complex study
- (5) Recommendations based on a single study
- (6) Statements refuted by reputable scientific organizations
- (7) Lists of “good” and “bad” foods
- (8) Recommendations made to help sell a product
- (9) Recommendations based on studies not peer reviewed
- (10) Recommendations from studies that ignore differences among individuals or groups.

## **Partnerships and collaborations**

It is the longstanding policy of the American Dietetic Association not to endorse companies, products or services—either specific items or general categories.

As a nonprofit organization committed to providing accurate, science-based information to the public, the American Dietetic Association occasionally collaborates with other organizations—for-profit, nonprofit and government—to achieve greater results than we could on the strengths of our own resources.

ADA leaders closely evaluate every potential collaboration. Only if the program is consistent with ADA positions—and if sponsorship will enable achievement of greater results than could be realized without funding—will a collaboration be pursued.

At no time, as is made clear to our partners, does acceptance of a grant to defray the costs of a program constitute ADA’s endorsement of a company, product or a service.

# WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

## AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

*Your link to nutrition and health.<sup>SM</sup>*

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### What is ADA?

With nearly 65,000 members, the American Dietetic Association is the nation's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals.

ADA was founded in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1917 by a visionary group of women, led by Lenna F. Cooper and ADA's first president, Lulu C. Graves, who were dedicated to helping the government conserve food and improve the public's health and nutrition in World War I.

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### ADA leaders

ADA is led by a Board of Directors composed of national leaders in nutrition and health. The dietetics profession is governed by a 130-member elected House of Delegates.

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### ADA location

Headquarters:

120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, IL 60606

800/877-1600

Washington office:

1120 Connecticut Avenue N.W.

Suite 480

Washington, DC 20036

800/877-0877

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### ADA mission

*Leading the future of dietetics*

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### ADA vision

*ADA's members are the most valued source of food and nutrition services*

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### ADA members

Approximately 75 percent of ADA members are registered dietitians

(RDs) and four percent are dietetic technicians, registered (DTRs). Other members include clinical and community dietetics professionals, consultants, food service managers, educators, researchers and students. Nearly half of all ADA members hold advanced academic degrees.

Members represent a wide range of practice areas and interests including public health; sports nutrition; medical nutrition therapy; diet counseling, cholesterol reduction, diabetes, heart and kidney disease; vegetarianism; food service management, hospitals, restaurants, long-term care facilities and education systems; education of other health-care professionals and scientific research.

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### Affiliated associations

Fifty state dietetic associations, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the American Overseas Dietetic Association, are affiliated with ADA. Within these groups, there are about 230 district associations.

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### Reliable nutrition information for the public: [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

ADA's dynamic Web site, [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org), contains a wealth of nutrition information for consumers and the media, from news releases and consumer tips to Nutrition Fact Sheets, FAQs and the *Good Nutrition Reading List*. Consumers seeking the services of a registered dietitian can use the "Find a Nutrition Professional" feature. In addition, [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) offers links to many other nutrition-oriented sites.

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## **ADA key areas of interest**

ADA's commitment to helping people enjoy healthy lives brings the Association into the forefront of five critical health areas facing all Americans:

- Obesity and overweight, with a focus on children
- Healthy aging
- Safe, sustainable and nutritious food supply
- Nutrigenetics and nutrigenomics
- Integrative medicine, including supplements and alternative medicine.

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## **What is a registered dietitian?**

A registered dietitian (RD) is a food and nutrition expert who has met academic and professional requirements including:

- Bachelor's degree with course work approved by ADA's Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education. Coursework typically includes food and nutrition sciences, foodservice systems management, business, economics, computer science, sociology, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology and chemistry.
- Complete an accredited, supervised, experiential practice program at a health-care facility, community agency or foodservice corporation.
- Pass a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.
- Complete continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration.

Some RDs hold additional certifications in specialized areas such as pediatric or renal nutrition and diabetes education. About half of all RDs work in clinical settings, private practice or health-care facilities. Many work in community and public health settings, academia and research, business, journalism, sports nutrition and wellness programs.

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## **What is a dietetic technician, registered?**

Dietetic technicians, registered (DTRs), often working in partnership with registered dietitians, screen, evaluate and educate patients; manage and prevent diseases such as diabetes and obesity and monitor patients' and clients' progress. DTRs work in settings such as hospitals and clinics, extended-care facilities, home health-care programs, schools, correctional facilities, restaurants, food companies, foodservice providers, public health agencies, government and community programs such as Meals on Wheels, health clubs, weight management clinics and wellness centers.

DTRs must complete a two-year college degree in an approved dietetic technician program, have supervised practice experience and pass a nationwide examination to earn the DTR credential and must complete continuing education courses throughout their careers.

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## **Credentialing agency for dietetics professionals**

The Commission on Dietetic Registration, the credentialing agency for ADA, awards credentials to individuals at entry, fellow and specialty levels who have met its standards for competency to practice in the profession, including successful completion of its national certification examination and recertification by continuing professional education and/or examination.

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## **Professional educational programs**

ADA's Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) is recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation and the United States Department of Education as the accrediting agency for education

programs that prepare dietetics professionals. Through the accreditation and approval of more than 600 undergraduate and graduate didactic, dietetic technician and supervised practice programs, CADE ensures that entry-level education meets quality standards.

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### **Home Food Safety . . . It's in Your Hands**

ADA's nationwide consumer education program is sponsored by educational grants from the ConAgra Foods Foundation. For more information on this award-winning program, visit [www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org).

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### **National Nutrition Month®**

ADA offers consumers timely, objective food and nutrition information through numerous programs and services. National Nutrition Month®, created in 1973 and celebrated in March, promotes healthful eating and provides practical nutrition guidance.

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### **Government and public policy**

ADA's Washington, D.C.,-based government affairs office works with state and federal legislators and agencies on public policy issues affecting consumers and the practice of dietetics, including Medicare coverage of medical nutrition therapy; child nutrition; obesity; the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and other health and nutrition priorities.

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### **ADA position statements**

ADA regularly produces and updates statements of the Association's official stance on issues that affect the nutritional and health status of the public. ADA position statements are derived from the latest available

research and facts. Position statements address issues such as children's health, food technology and safety, public health, consumer education, health-care reform, elderly nutrition and health-care provider education. Texts of ADA position statements are available on [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

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### **Journal of the American Dietetic Association**

The most widely read peer-reviewed periodical in the dietetics field, the monthly *Journal* brings original research, critical reviews and reports and authoritative commentary and information to nutrition and dietetics professionals throughout the world. Access the table of contents, research study abstracts and selected articles at [www.adajournal.org](http://www.adajournal.org).

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### **ADA Foundation**

The American Dietetic Association Foundation (ADAF) was established in 1966 as a 501(C)(3) public charity. Its mission is to fund the future of the dietetics profession through research and education. The Foundation's vision is to be a leader in promoting and achieving healthy weight for children, helping to reduce the growing prevalence of childhood obesity. ADAF achieves its goals by providing support for research, education and public awareness programs. The Foundation is proud to be recognized as the largest grantor of scholarships in the nutrition and dietetics fields. For the 2005-06 academic year, ADAF invested in the future of the dietetics profession by awarding \$238,500 for 186 graduate, undergraduate and continuing education scholarships.

# Glossary of media relations terminology

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This glossary contains definitions of many specialized terms used by public relations experts and journalists.

**Account team:** The public relations or advertising agency staff assigned to a specific client, generally consisting of various members and often including an account director, account manager, senior account executive/account executive and account assistants.

**Advertising:** Presenting persuasive material to the public by means of paid space or broadcast time to promote a product, idea or service.

**Angle:** A particular approach a reporter takes in writing a story.

**AP style:** Standardized rules of grammar and writing style, issued by the Associated Press wire service. See “Wire services.”

**Area of Dominant Influence (ADI):** Geographic area reached by radio stations.

**Audiovisuals (AV):** Presentation methods that use sight and sound in order to enhance the understanding of a topic. AV includes the use of electronic devices, usually involving screen and visual images, as contrasted with printed material.

**Backgrounder:** Any briefing or report intended only for the purpose of providing background information to a reporter.

**Beat:** A journalist’s specialty area of coverage.

**Brainstorming:** The creative method for producing a multitude of ideas on a given subject or problem.

**Bridging:** Interview technique designed to help a speaker transition from an off-topic

question back to the original subject. See “Hooking” and “Flagging.”

**Broadcast:** The dissemination of programs or messages through the media of radio, Internet or television.

**B-roll:** Video with natural sound that does not include a reporter’s voiceover.

**Business Newswire:** A distribution service that delivers breaking business news and multimedia content to traditional and online newsrooms and to targeted journalists.

**Byline:** Name of the writer positioned under the headline at the beginning of a story.

**Bylined article:** Article written by a non-media person, usually an expert in a certain field and submitted for publication.

**Callback:** Telephone follow-up to a printed invitation or advisory.

**Client:** The organization or person who employs the services of a public relations or advertising firm.

**Consumer publication:** Printed matter intended for a general reader.

**Content analysis:** The technique of reading publications, advertisements or other messages to find references to an organization or an idea, then coding and analyzing the content to determine trends and opinions.

**Contract:** A formal agreement made between the service provider and the client, covering

agreed objectives, timing and price.

**Copy:** Written text.

**Corporate communications:**

Public relations for a corporation, integrated as part of the company's overall strategic objectives, rather than activities designed for its individual segments.

**Crisis management:** The practice of preparing a communications plan that can be effectively put into action in the event of a potentially negative issue for a company or organization.

**Cue sheet:** A piece of written material containing messages about the client or its products or an extract from a paper or magazine. Also referred to as clipping.

**Dateline:** The place and date of an article's origin that appears at the beginning of the first paragraph of an article.

**Daybook:** Daily schedules of upcoming news events, published by the Associated Press and other wire services.

**Deadline:** A time limit for the completion of an article or other assignment by a reporter or other contributor.

**Delayed lead:** Writing style where the specific subject of a story doesn't come into clear focus until some time after the first paragraph(s), usually in an attempt to set the background and tone before getting to the main point.

**Designated Market Area (DMA):** Area reached by television stations.

**Direct mail:** The use of letters or personalized advertising, targeted to carefully selected

lists of people, in order to promote a specific product, idea or service.

**Editor:** The supervisor of a department of a newspaper, magazine, etc.

**Editorial:** Expression of opinion, as opposed to a news article which presents facts without opinion, that often appears on the editorial page separate from news stories. Also refers in general to the informational material in a publication as opposed to the advertising.

**E-mail pitch:** A pitch sent via e-mail instead of presented to the media by phone, mail or fax.

**Embargo date:** A heading on a news release indicating that the news is not to be reported before that date.

**Exclusive:** An interview or story opportunity presented solely to one reporter or publication and not to others.

**Exposure:** The extent to which the target audience becomes aware of a person, activity, theme or organization from the efforts of PR or advertising.

**Fact sheet:** A list of facts or statistics about a particular topic that allows media quickly to grasp a particular issue or situation.

**Feature article:** A newspaper or magazine article that discusses and interprets an event or trend, as opposed to spot reporting.

**Flagging:** Interview technique designed to call attention to a speaker's key messages. See "Hooking" and "Bridging."

**Freelance writer:** A person who sells his or her articles to a publication without a long-term commitment.

**Ghostwriting:** Writing generated

without published credit to its author and often credited to another.

**Graf:** Paragraph.

**Hard news:** A story that is truly newsworthy, presented factually and objectively.

**Hooking:** Interview technique designed to lead an interviewer to ask a question that the speaker particularly wants to answer. See “Bridging” and “Flagging.”

**Internal communications:**

Communicating with employees and shareholders to inform them of change or to further corporate objectives.

**Interview alert:** A means of presenting an expert source willing to comment on a timely issue, including contact information to set up an interview. See “Media advisory.”

**Lead:** Beginning of a news story, generally containing the who, what, when, where and why.

**Lead story:** Dominant article that is given primary attention and prominent placement on the first page of a publication.

**Lead time:** The deadline for submission of articles, set by reporters or publications, which allows enough time to for a piece to be written, edited and sent to print.

**Letter to the editor:** Letter written and submitted by a non-publication staff member, usually complimenting or criticizing the coverage of an issue by the publication.

**Libel:** Printing or broadcasting false or defamatory statements that injure a person’s reputation.

**Media advisory:** A brief summary of a recent news event, followed by the background and

credentials of an expert willing to comment upon it. Also known as an “interview alert.”

**Media call report:** A log recording the media sent a release or contacted for a specific pitch, which details when the contact was made, with whom and to what result.

**Media kit:** Organized package of information that includes background information on a general topic or special events. See “Press kit.”

**Media list:** A list of reporters and/or editors strategically chosen to reach a specific audience relevant to the person or story being pitched.

**Media relations:** Working with journalists to build productive relationships and generate coverage.

**Media training:** Providing people with guidelines, strategies and skills to work effectively with media for public relations purposes.

**Message:** Words or statements that you want to convey to third parties such as the media and the public.

**Natural sound:** The audio portion of a broadcast tape that is recorded naturally by the camera or microphone.

**News:** Information that is new, unusual, unexpected, controversial, of wide significance or interest to audience of a publication or program.

**News angle:** That which is new, important, different or unusual about a specific event, situation or person.

**News conference:** Prearranged gathering of media representatives to announce and

explain a significant and newsworthy subject or event. See “Press conference.”

**News hole:** Space reserved for material other than advertising.

**News peg:** A particular angle of a story that ties in with current events or something newsworthy.

**News release:** The most common written form used in public relations, announcing a client’s news and information. See “Press release.”

**News wire:** Any of several electronic services providing late-breaking news stories or other up-to-the-minute information.

**Official statement:** A written comment prepared for the purpose of responding consistently to any question from the media regarding a particular controversial issue.

**Op-ed:** Opinion and column page usually opposite the editorial page.

**Pitch:** An angle encompassing a unique or interesting aspect of a story or person, used to catch the media’s attention and to sell reporters on a particular story or interview.

**Press conference:** A meeting at which media reporters ask questions of a specialist, politician, celebrity or other notable individual. See “News conference.”

**Press office/officer:** Group or individual that handles media inquiries and puts out messages and press releases to the media on behalf of an organization. Also known as public information officers and media relations managers or directors.

**Press kit:** A collection of promotional materials for

distribution to the media, usually at press conferences. See “media kit.” Press release: An announcement of an event or other newsworthy item issued to the press. See “News release.”

**PR Newswire:** An electronic distribution service that provides communications services for public relations and investor relations professionals, such as information distribution and market intelligence.

**ProfNet:** A service of PR Newswire that distributes media queries to various audiences to connect writers and reporters with expert sources.

**Proposal:** Document outlining a proposed PR campaign to an existing or potential client.

**Public affairs:** The process of communicating an organization’s point of view on issues or causes to political audiences.

**Publicity/media tour:** Scheduled appearances by a newsmaker in a series of cities or locations.

**Public Service Announcement (PSA):** Advertising with a message in the interest of the public, usually run free of charge at the station’s discretion.

**Publisher:** The business head of a newspaper organization or publishing house, commonly the owner or the representative of the owner.

**Pyramid:** Style of news writing in which the most important information is put in the lead, followed by less and less important information, constructed so an editor can cut after any paragraph and have a complete story that meets space limitations.

**Q & A:** An exchange of questions and answers, typically between a



- single authority and the press.
- Reporter:** A writer, investigator or presenter of news stories, employed to gather and report news for a print publication, wire service or broadcast station.
- Sector press:** The media relevant to specific audiences, including special interest magazines and newsletters.
- Sidebar:** Feature appearing in tandem with a news article, giving additional human interest or historical aspects of a story.
- Slug:** Short name or title given to a print or broadcast story used for identification purposes.
- Server:** A machine that provides a specific kind of service to client software running on other computers. The term “server” can refer to a particular piece of software or to the machine on which the software is running. A single server can run several different server software packages, providing many different servers to clients on the network.
- Sound bite:** A very brief quote excerpted from a person’s broadcast interview, used in the media to convey a certain idea or opinion.
- Source:** Any person with information useful to the media.
- Special event:** Activity arranged for the purpose of generating publicity.
- Spot news:** Current breaking news, reported immediately.
- Stylebook:** An organization’s printed guide to matters of grammar and style. See “AP style.”
- Talking points:** A list of a few key messages that a speaker wants to be sure to mention in an interview.
- Target audience:** Selected group of people who share similar needs or demographic characteristics, such as income, age, sex, occupation or education and best represent the most likely potential recipients of an organization’s message.
- Tease/Teaser:** An enticing lead to a story that tells just enough about the story to urge the reader or listener to continue. In a public relations context, it is a promotion that is intended to arouse interest in the main PR campaign that follows.
- Tip sheet:** A list of story ideas and contact information provided to the media.
- Trade publication:** Publication that focuses on a specific profession or industry.
- Underwriting:** Financial backing of a program or event.
- Video News Release (VNR):** Broadcast version of a press release; usually includes packaged news story between one minute and 90 seconds that is ready for on-the-air use and B-roll to allow producers to edit and create their own stories.
- Voiceover:** A reporter’s or anchor’s recorded script that is heard over broadcast news pieces (also used in commercials).
- Wire copy:** Stories supplied by news wire services.
- Wire services:** Companies that supply news to media clients on a subscription basis.
- Word count:** Length limitations placed on a written piece.

# Sample pitch letter 1

.....

<Date>

<Address>

<Salutation>

The “summer slim” is on. Consumers are being bombarded with weight reduction programs. Recent hearings in Washington revealed that many Americans may be risking their health and developing serious medical complications. Can we protect the consumer? How does one evaluate weight loss programs? Is there a safe way to lose weight or does every program have its risks?

People want answers to these questions and they want guidance. As a registered dietitian, I can give your viewers answers. I can also provide them with quick, simple ways to evaluate programs. A method of evaluation has been developed to aid and protect consumers from fraudulent, dangerous and risky programs. I can separate fact and fallacy as it relates to weight reduction.

I am available for interviews any time this month. My biography is enclosed. I will call you shortly to explore this possibility. In the meantime, please feel free to call me at 555/555-5555.

Sincerely,

<Name>

<Title>

<Phone>

<E-mail>

## Sample pitch letter 2

.....

<Date>

<Reporter/producer>

<Publication/Station address>

Dear <Contact name>:

March is National Nutrition Month®!

This year's theme, "Theme title," encourages Americans of all ages to make healthy eating, physical activity and lifestyle choices. Please join us in celebrating National Nutrition Month at <list one or two key activities, times, dates and locations>.

This year's National Nutrition Month theme, <This year's theme>, incorporates key messages all consumers should keep in mind during National Nutrition Month and throughout the year:

- Be adventurous and expand your horizons
- Treat your taste buds
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Balance food choices with your lifestyle
- Be active.

Please join in the fun as we "Theme title," at <list one or two key activities, times, dates and locations>.

Enclosed is additional information about National Nutrition Month <backgrounder, etc.>. We look forward to seeing you on <date of event>! I will call you on <date>.

Sincerely,

<Name>

<Phone>

<E-mail>

# Sample press release 1

.....  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**<DATE>**

For more information, contact: <Your name>  
<Phone number>  
<E-mail>

## **<CITY> LEADER IN FOOD, NUTRITION AND HEALTH ATTENDS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE SPONSORED BY AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION**

CHICAGO – <Your full name>, a <credentials, such as registered dietitian> and <city> resident, was among the national leaders of the American Dietetic Association who were selected to attend ADA's second Leadership Institute, held January 13-16 in St. Petersburg, Fla.

<Your last name> is <your job/title/occupation>. <Your last name> serves the American Dietetic Association as <your ADA leadership position>.

“The purpose of the program was to enhance the leadership competencies of ADA members through a combination of information, skill development and intensive practice-based educational experiences,” said registered dietitian and ADA President Rebecca S. Reeves.

“The Institute was designed to further ADA’s mission of leading the future of dietetics. In addition, the program provides an opportunity for dietetics professionals to enhance their ability to lead within ADA as well as their own places of employment, to assist other ADA members in mastering change in their environments and to advance the goals of the dietetics profession,” Laramée said.

<Optional: Include one or two more sentences of biographical information about yourself.>

With nearly 65,000 members, the Chicago-based American Dietetic Association is the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. ADA serves the public by promoting nutrition, health and well-being. Visit ADA at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

## Sample press release 2

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FOR RELEASE AT 1 P.M. EASTERN TIME  
APRIL 19, 2005

Media contact: Jane Doe, 800/877-1600, ext. 123  
media@eatright.org

**Statement by Susan H. Laramée, registered dietitian and president of the American Dietetic Association, on the release of the new “MyPyramid” Food Guidance System graphic symbol by the U.S. Department of Agriculture:**

The ultimate value and success of the new “MyPyramid” Food Guidance System graphic will be measured by whether it can serve as an effective tool to help people eat according to the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Time will tell if MyPyramid will convey to consumers the vital nutritional messages of balance, variety, moderation and adequacy. If MyPyramid can assist people in effectively adopting the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines*, it will be a great success.

As the American Dietetic Association recommended to the USDA last year, the iconic and widely known shape of the Food Guide Pyramid has been retained as the government’s primary graphical symbol of variety, proportion and moderation in making good nutritional choices. ADA recommended that the educational messages within and accompanying the Pyramid should be updated to improve consumer understanding, which has also been done.

The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines* emphasize greater consumption of fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products and whole grains – foods that are naturally high in nutrients and low in calories. That is consistent with ADA’s positions and consumer messages that emphasize the individual’s total diet, or overall pattern of food consumed. ADA and the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* agree that the keys are:

- Take a personalized approach to dietary advice and weight management, recognizing one size does not fit all.
- Eat a variety of foods from every group in balance and in moderation.
- Pay attention to calorie consumption.
- Achieve a balance between food and regular physical activity.

The American Dietetic Association was deeply involved with the development of the *Dietary Guidelines*, and we will be just as involved in using them to set the nation’s policy directions in nutrition programs, research, education, food assistance, labeling

and promotion. On an individual level, our members will incorporate MyPyramid and its accompanying materials into our client counseling, patient care and consumer education. The food and nutrition experts of the American Dietetic Association are committed to helping people understand and apply the recommendations of the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in their daily lives.

The American Dietetic Association is the nation's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. With nearly 65,000 members, the Chicago-based ADA serves the public by promoting optimal health and well-being for all people. Visit ADA at **[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)**.

# Sample media advisory 1

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**FOR RELEASE FEBRUARY 22, 2005**

Media contact: Jane Doe, 800/877-1600, ext. 123  
media@eatright.org

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**WHAT:** American Dietetic Association's annual Public Policy Workshop

**WHEN:** March 1-3, 2005

**WHERE:** Capital Hilton, 1001 16<sup>th</sup> St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

**WHO:** More than 300 dietetics professionals from all parts of the country will receive updates on legislative and policy aspects of leading national issues in food and nutrition from members of Congress, representatives of federal agencies, fellow ADA members and other experts.

**WHY:** ADA's Public Policy Workshop gives dietetics professionals information and tools to advocate effectively for policies that improve people's health and well-being through nutrition.

Session topics include the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*; development of school wellness policies as required by the 2004 Child Nutrition Act; ADA's 2005 federal legislative priorities:

reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act, which funds unmet health-care needs and support services for people with HIV/AIDS; reauthorization of the Older Americans Act; expanding Medicare coverage of medical nutrition therapy.

Scheduled speakers include (all times Eastern; speakers and times are subject to change):

### **Tuesday, March 1**

- 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. session

2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*: Rear Adm. Cristina Beato, assistant secretary for public health and science, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. session

Food labeling issues: Barbara Schneeman, director of the Office of Nutritional Products, Labeling and Dietary Supplements in the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition.

### **Wednesday, March 2**

- 8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m. session (Senate/Congressional Room)  
U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), recipient of ADA's 2005 Public Policy Leadership Award.  
Agenda for the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress: U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.).
- 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. lunch session (Senate/Congressional Room)  
The work of the National Dairy Council in children's nutrition:  
Robert Murray, associate professor of pediatrics, Ohio State University School of Medicine.

### **Thursday, March 3**

- 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. breakfast session (Room G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building)  
Health agenda for the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress: U.S. Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.).
- ADA members meet throughout the day with senators and congressmen.

With nearly 65,000 members, ADA is the nation's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The American Dietetic Association serves the public by promoting optimal nutrition, health and well-being. Visit ADA at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).



## Sample media advisory 2

.....

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**August 7, 2005**

### **ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL OPENS CHICAGO AREA'S FIRST CHILDHOOD OBESITY RESEARCH AND TREATMENT CENTER**

**WHAT:** Official opening of the Childhood Obesity Research and Treatment Center at St. Joseph's Hospital, Lombard, Ill., the Chicago area's first center devoted entirely to childhood obesity

**WHO:** Registered dietitian Janet Carlson, director of the center, and families of two children being treated at the center will be available for interviews.

**WHEN:** Thursday, August 18, 2005, 10 a.m.

**WHERE:** On the east side of the hospital's main entrance, 418 N. Elm St., Lombard. Parking is available in Lot G.

**WHY:** Government estimates indicate nearly one in four children in the United States is overweight or obese. The St. Joseph Hospital Center will provide treatment for area children and their families and conduct scientific research into the causes and potential solutions to this national problem.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Janet Carlson, MS, RD: 630-765-4321

# Using ADA positions

(Reprinted from November 1997 *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, page 1248)

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

## How can you use ADA positions?

The American Dietetic Association's (ADA) science-based, consumer-focused positions continue to support the Association's mission of service and leadership by supporting public education efforts, influencing public policy development, promoting and supporting member development, and supporting the strategic initiatives (1). ADA positions are most effective, however, when promoted to the appropriate audiences and used extensively by members (2).

ADA defines a position as "a statement of the Association's stance on an issue that impacts the nutritional status of the public, is derived from pertinent facts and data, and is germane to the mission, vision, philosophy, and values of the Association" (3). A position has two parts: a one- to two-sentence statement conveying the main points and a support paper that provides scientific background.

At present, ADA has 43 positions on various food and nutrition topics, including "Vegetarian diets," which appears on page 1317 of this issue. The Association Positions Committee (APC), a committee of the House of Delegates, oversees the position development and maintenance process. In the October 1996 *ADA Courier*, APC surveyed members about their use of positions. The results showed that members are using positions in a variety of creative ways.

### Getting to the Point

Several respondents said that positions are helpful in preparing remarks for presentations to community groups, dietetics professionals, and health professionals. Positions are useful for articulating ADA's opinion. They provide strong support and a firm stance on controversial food and nutrition issues. One person stated, "They are an invaluable resource

*Valerie B. Duffy, PhD, RD, is the chair, and Harold Holler, RD, is the ADA staff partner on the Association Positions Committee.*

to me when I am developing a presentation on a controversial issue."

Positions may be used to develop specific guidelines and recommendations. One respondent said, "I've used the vegetarian diets position in committee presentations to justify the need for offering vegetarian entree choices to our customers in contract foodservice settings."

### Marketing Partnerships and New Programs

Positions provide an authoritative reference for expanding food and nutrition services to new areas and supporting arguments for current services. Positions can provide the rationale for instituting new programs. One member wrote, "Positions are the starting points for collaborative efforts. The position 'Oral health and nutrition' (4) started the discussions about nutrition education needs of dental practitioners with the state dental association and department of health. The position gave strength to my opinion and recommendations for nutrition education."

Added one member, "I have also used positions to support the need for a dietitian in home care and for the role of nutrition in managed care." Another respondent related how the position "Phytochemicals and functional foods" (5) provided a new job opportunity in a food development company.

### Advancing Public Opinion/Policy

"I use positions in my role as State Legislative Chair. They are very helpful to support my message, shape an opinion and to provide additional references." Many respondents noted that they use positions to convey key messages to legislators and policy makers. Positions can influence policy development by serving as the basis for testimony delivered to policy makers.

### Guiding Members and Health Professionals

Respondents also indicated that they use positions to educate physicians and other

health professionals. One member stated, "I share ADA positions with other professionals and paraprofessionals to spread the science-based opinion of food and nutrition experts." Another person wrote, "In teaching, positions provide a thorough overview of an issue. They provide a synopsis of information that is relevant to dietetics practice." Many respondents use positions in their curriculum for dietetics and nursing students.

In addition, positions may be used to formulate handouts, develop standards of care and critical pathways, and establish policies and procedures. Positions may be incorporated into the documents and articles used in specific practice settings or reviewed for an update of current knowledge and opinions about food and nutrition.

### **Crafting Food and Nutrition Sound Bites**

Positions can provide background and support for food and nutrition articles or media interviews. One respondent said, "When I write for newspapers or give an interview, I use positions as a guideline and often quote them." Another reported, "Whenever contacted by the media, I always check to see if there is an ADA position to shape my comments on the subject." Positions provide concise, relevant food and nutrition information for developing responses to a media inquiry.

### **Conclusion**

APC encourages dietetics professionals to

use positions to support their practice and to suggest new positions that will help the profession in the future. Association positions provide support to influence others regarding food and nutrition issues. Establishing qualified dietetics professionals as the preferred source of food and nutrition information will ensure our future as a profession. As Ronni Chernoff, ADA past president, stated: "We should all be concerned about the future because we will spend the rest of our lives there. We will be ready for whatever lies ahead if we take charge and create our own future" (6). Positions build the stairs to take you to your future.

### **References**

1. The American Dietetic Association. Creating the future: 1996-1999 Strategic Framework. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 1996;96:559-562.
2. Derelian D, Gilbride J. President's page: positions-an important means of fulfilling our mission and vision. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 1995;95:92.
3. House of Delegates Manual Chicago, Ill: American Dietetic Association; 1997:32.
4. Position of The American Dietetic Association: oral health and nutrition. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 1996;96:184-189.
5. Position of The American Dietetic Association: phytochemicals and functional foods. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 1995;95:493-496.
6. Chernoff R. President's page: strategic planning-the key to the future. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 1996;96:613.

#### **How can you access ADA positions?**

- Visit the ADA World Wide Web site at [www.eatright.org/positions.html](http://www.eatright.org/positions.html) to download a position.
- Check the February issue of the *Journal of The American Dietetic Association* each year for a list of current positions (p 190 in February 1997).
- Contact Sara Garcia at ADA Headquarters: call 800/877-1600, ext 4898, or E-mail [hod@eatright.org](mailto:hod@eatright.org), for a single copy of a position.

# Creative Calendar

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## January

- New Year's Day
- Good New-Trition for the New Year
- Solution for resolutions
- Tips for taking off extra pounds

## February

- American Heart Month
- Children's Dental Health Month
- Valentine's Day
  - Health benefits of chocolate
  - Be heart smart to your sweetheart
  - Fitting sweets into the diet
- Super Bowl Sunday

## March

- **National Nutrition Month®**
- St. Patrick's Day
  - Eat your greens
  - Nutritional value of Irish foods

## April

- April Fools' Day
  - Myths about food might "fool" you
  - Don't be "fooled" by fad diets
- Cancer Control Month
- Easter egg safety
- Passover

## May

- National Barbecue Month
- Cinco de Mayo
  - Healthy Mexican recipes
- Digestive Diseases Awareness Month
- National Family Month
- High Blood Pressure Month
- Mother's Day
  - What your mother told you about nutrition
  - Nutritious meals kids can prepare
- Older Americans Month
- Osteoporosis Prevention Week
- Physical Fitness and Sports Month
- Stroke Awareness Month

## June

- Summer festivals
- National Dairy Month
- Father's Day
  - Nutritional needs of men
  - Healthy meals for kids to prepare for dad
- Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Month

- Family vacations
  - Eating healthfully on the road

## **July**

- Independence Day
  - Low-fat fireworks
  - Add “sparkle” to your meals
- Safe summer grilling
- Healthy foods at ballparks
- Healthy foods at state and county fairs
- Hydration stories
- Family vacations
  - Eating healthfully on the road

## **August**

- Back to school
  - Pack a healthy, fun and nutritious lunchbox
  - Manage a diet on dorm food
  - Avoid the “Freshman 15”
  - College cooking on a budget
- Family vacations
  - Dashboard dining

## **September**

- National Cholesterol Education Month
- National Food Safety Education Month
  - Home Food Safety . . . It's in Your Hands*
  - [www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org)
- Labor Day
- Self-Improvement Month

## **October**

- **ADA Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo**
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Halloween
  - Healthy Halloween treats for kids
  - Haunting truth about your pantry
- Hunger Awareness Month
- Vegetarian Awareness Month

## **November**

- National Diabetes Month
- Great American Smokeout
  - Effects of smoking on nutrition
  - Weight gain associated with smoking
- Thanksgiving
  - Balance, variety and moderation
  - Turkey tips

## **December**

- Christmas and Hanukkah
  - Healthy snacks for the holidays
  - Weight maintenance over the holidays
  - “Girth control”

# Newspaper Data Sheet

.....

NEWSPAPER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DAILY  WEEKLY  A.M.  P.M.  SUNDAY EDITION

CIRCULATION \_\_\_\_\_

DEADLINES:

LOCAL OFFICE/STRINGER \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE	NAME	PHONE
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General Manager	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

Editor-in-Chief	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

Managing Editor	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

Ass't Managing Editor	_____	_____
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Editorial Page Editor	_____	_____
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City Editor	_____	_____
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Features Editor	_____	_____
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SPECIAL SECTIONS	NAME	PHONE
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Metro	_____	_____
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Entertainment	_____	_____
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Lifestyle	_____	_____
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Sports	_____	_____
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Business	_____	_____
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Religion	_____	_____
----------	-------	-------

Sunday	_____	_____
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Sections	_____	_____
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Food	_____	_____
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Medical/Health	_____	_____
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# Newspaper Data Sheet

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NEWSPAPER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DAILY  WEEKLY  A.M.  P.M.  SUNDAY EDITION

CIRCULATION \_\_\_\_\_

DEADLINES:

LOCAL OFFICE/STRINGER \_\_\_\_\_

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
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General Manager	_____	_____
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Editor-in-Chief	_____	_____
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Managing Editor	_____	_____
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Ass't Managing Editor	_____	_____
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Editorial Page Editor	_____	_____
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City Editor	_____	_____
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Features Editor	_____	_____
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<b>SPECIAL SECTIONS</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
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Metro	_____	_____
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Entertainment	_____	_____
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Lifestyle	_____	_____
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Sports	_____	_____
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Business	_____	_____
----------	-------	-------

Religion	_____	_____
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Sunday	_____	_____
--------	-------	-------

Sections	_____	_____
----------	-------	-------

Food	_____	_____
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Medical/Health	_____	_____
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# Newspaper Data Sheet

.....

NEWSPAPER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DAILY  WEEKLY  A.M.  P.M.  SUNDAY EDITION

CIRCULATION \_\_\_\_\_

DEADLINES:

LOCAL OFFICE/STRINGER \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE	NAME	PHONE
-------	------	-------

General Manager	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

Editor-in-Chief	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

Managing Editor	_____	_____
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Ass't Managing Editor	_____	_____
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Editorial Page Editor	_____	_____
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City Editor	_____	_____
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Features Editor	_____	_____
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SPECIAL SECTIONS	NAME	PHONE
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Metro	_____	_____
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Entertainment	_____	_____
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Lifestyle	_____	_____
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Sports	_____	_____
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Business	_____	_____
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Religion	_____	_____
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Sunday	_____	_____
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Sections	_____	_____
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Food	_____	_____
------	-------	-------

Medical/Health	_____	_____
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# Television Station Data Sheet



TV STATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE	NAME	PHONE
-------	------	-------

Station Manager	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

News Director	_____	_____
---------------	-------	-------

Public Service Director	_____	_____
-------------------------	-------	-------

Community Affairs Dir.	_____	_____
------------------------	-------	-------

News Assignment Editor	_____	_____
------------------------	-------	-------

Health/Medical Reporter	_____	_____
-------------------------	-------	-------

Local Talk Show Host	_____	_____
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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Length \_\_\_\_\_

Format \_\_\_\_\_

Deadlines \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

## DAILY NEWS PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	FORMAT	CONTACTS
---------	--------	----------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

# Television Station Data Sheet

TV STATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE	NAME	PHONE
-------	------	-------

Station Manager	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

News Director	_____	_____
---------------	-------	-------

Public Service Director	_____	_____
-------------------------	-------	-------

Community Affairs Dir.	_____	_____
------------------------	-------	-------

News Assignment Editor	_____	_____
------------------------	-------	-------

Health/Medical Reporter	_____	_____
-------------------------	-------	-------

Local Talk Show Host	_____	_____
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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Length \_\_\_\_\_

Format \_\_\_\_\_

Deadlines \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

## DAILY NEWS PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	FORMAT	CONTACTS
---------	--------	----------

_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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# Television Station Data Sheet



TV STATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE	NAME	PHONE
-------	------	-------

Station Manager	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

News Director	_____	_____
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Public Service Director	_____	_____
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Community Affairs Dir.	_____	_____
------------------------	-------	-------

News Assignment Editor	_____	_____
------------------------	-------	-------

Health/Medical Reporter	_____	_____
-------------------------	-------	-------

Local Talk Show Host	_____	_____
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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Length \_\_\_\_\_

Format \_\_\_\_\_

Deadlines \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

## DAILY NEWS PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	FORMAT	CONTACTS
---------	--------	----------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

# Radio Station Data Sheet

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RADIO STATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FORMAT\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*e.g., news, rock, country/western, call-in

TITLE	NAME	PHONE
-------	------	-------

Station Manager	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

News Director	_____	_____
---------------	-------	-------

Public Service Director	_____	_____
-------------------------	-------	-------

Program Director	_____	_____
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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Length \_\_\_\_\_

Format \_\_\_\_\_

Deadlines \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS/TALK SHOWS

PROGRAM	FORMAT	CONTACTS
---------	--------	----------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

# Radio Station Data Sheet

.....

RADIO STATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FORMAT\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*e.g., news, rock, country/western, call-in

TITLE	NAME	PHONE
-------	------	-------

Station Manager	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

News Director	_____	_____
---------------	-------	-------

Public Service Director	_____	_____
-------------------------	-------	-------

Program Director	_____	_____
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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Length \_\_\_\_\_

Format \_\_\_\_\_

Deadlines \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS/TALK SHOWS

PROGRAM	FORMAT	CONTACTS
---------	--------	----------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

# Radio Station Data Sheet

.....

RADIO STATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FORMAT\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*e.g., news, rock, country/western, call-in

TITLE	NAME	PHONE
-------	------	-------

Station Manager	_____	_____
-----------------	-------	-------

News Director	_____	_____
---------------	-------	-------

Public Service Director	_____	_____
-------------------------	-------	-------

Program Director	_____	_____
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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Length \_\_\_\_\_

Format \_\_\_\_\_

Deadlines \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments \_\_\_\_\_

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS/TALK SHOWS

PROGRAM	FORMAT	CONTACTS
---------	--------	----------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____















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