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Registered dietitians and nutrition practices
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GUIDE

What a first dietitian visit looks like

A first nutrition visit is an assessment: history, habits, goals and a plan. Bring a food record and your medication list.

Updated November 13, 2026

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A first dietitian visit is an assessment, not a test. You talk. The dietitian listens, asks questions and starts a plan.

What happens in the visit

Clinic pages describe a consistent shape for the first appointment:

- Review of your health history, conditions, family history and recent lab work.
- Questions about your current eating pattern, schedule, sleep, activity and food budget.
- Your goals, in your words.
- Education and a first plan.

UC San Diego Health says a first appointment typically includes an initial assessment of your history and background, dietary guidance and meal planning help, and referrals to other services when needed. [UC San Diego Health, accessed 2026-11-13.]

Fresno State's student health centre describes a first visit of up to 60 minutes: medical history, lifestyle and eating habits, then goal setting. It suggests bringing a brief food journal of the last three days, plus medication and supplement names and doses. [Fresno State Student Health, accessed 2026-11-13.]

Colorado State University's nutrition centre says the first appointment is a 50-minute initial assessment covering habits, goals and a plan of care. Most of the education and goal work happens in follow-up visits. [Colorado State University KRNC, accessed 2026-11-13.]

Before you go

1. Write down your questions and your main goal.
2. Keep a food record for two or three days. Write everything, including drinks and snacks.
3. List medications, supplements and any allergies.
4. Collect recent lab results if you have them.
5. Check whether the practice bills insurance and what you owe at booking.

What it is not

A first visit does not diagnose. If you have symptoms that worry you, see a doctor first. A dietitian works alongside your care team, not instead of it.

Cost at a glance

Healthline reports that dietitian appointments often start around $100 per hour in the US, with intake visits around $150 to $250 and follow-ups around $100 to $150. Insurance can change this completely. See our guide on what a dietitian costs for details and dates. [Healthline, accessed 2026-11-13.]

Sources

All sources fetched and checked 2026-11-13:

- UC San Diego Health: Nutrition Counseling Services
- Fresno State Student Health: Nutrition Services
- Colorado State University KRNC: Frequently Asked Questions
- Healthline: How Much Does a Dietitian Nutritionist Cost?

Frequently asked questions

How long is a first dietitian appointment?

It depends on the practice. University clinics describe first visits of about 45 to 60 minutes. Some practices offer a shorter paid consultation first.

Do I need to fast or bring anything?

No fasting is needed. Bring a list of medications and supplements, and a short food record if you can. A three-day food log helps but is optional.

Sources

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