

## Chef/Cook in Long-Term Care

A chef or a cook prepares, cooks, and assembles meals. Cooks often plan menus and may engage in nutrition planning, costing, and purchasing food and receiving deliveries. They need to make sure they are meeting standards of food safety, hygiene, and sanitation.<sup>1</sup>

In a long-term care (LTC) home, cooks will interact with and prepare meals for the same residents each day. They get to know their likes and dislikes and their specific needs. They need to pay special attention to the dietary requirements, needs, and requests of each resident, including modifying the texture for residents who may have difficulty chewing or swallowing. Cooks work closely with the Nutrition Manager chef and [Food Service Workers](#) to ensure that nutritional needs are being met. They may be involved in meal-time activities and interact with LTC home residents.

If you are a people person, becoming a chef or a cook in LTC will give you the opportunity to build strong and lasting relationships with LTC home residents. If you enjoy cooking for family or friends, preparing meals for LTC home residents may provide a similar experience. And you may learn something about the foods that they have enjoyed throughout their lives as well.

## Training Programs and Placements

A number of colleges offer culinary training, once you've completed an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). See the [Ontario Colleges website](#) for a list of colleges offering culinary programs. These programs can take between 2-4 years resulting in a diploma or degree. In addition to learning cooking skills, you will also learn about workplace communication, kitchen management, food theory and preparation.

Many programs also incorporate a work placement as part of the curriculum to give you practical experience.<sup>2</sup> You may choose to do a placement in a LTC home to gain experience working in the sector. The [Ontario CLRI](#) can connect you to LTC homes to complete your placement.

Some colleges offer a combined culinary and nutrition program or a nutrition management post-graduate certificate which would provide you with the skills you need to work in a healthcare environment, such as LTC.

## For more information on food preparation in LTC:

For a brief overview of nutritional considerations in LTC, see [10 Nutritional considerations for LTC residents](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario (2020). *Cook*. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/cook>

<sup>2</sup> ontariocolleges.ca (n.d.). *Chef / Culinary Arts*. Retrieved from <https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en/programs/culinary-hospitality-recreation-and-tourism/chef-culinary-arts>

For more detailed information on how LTC home menus are planned, foods are prepared and to learn about best practices in food services in LTC, see [2019 Best practices for Nutrition, Food Service and Dining in LTC Homes](#).

## Managerial Positions in Food Services

LTC homes have a number of opportunities in food services and you can move into managerial positions with further training and experience. There are a number of management level roles in the food service department that you may want to pursue. Depending upon the size of the LTC home, the responsibilities assigned, and the titles specific to each home, these roles may be called: Manager of Food Services, Nutrition Manager, Director of Food Services, or Director of Hospitality. Here we will describe the role of the Nutrition Manager, but other management roles in this area would look very similar, perhaps with differing levels of responsibility and duties.

Nutrition Managers work together with both the food service team and the healthcare team. They are leaders, as they manage the operations of the Food and Nutrition department and staff. The Nutrition Manager must understand each resident's nutritional, therapeutic and cultural requirements and offer menu options that can meet a variety of needs. They also need to understand business operations and work closely with operations staff to procure food, kitchen equipment and ensure everything is working well in the department, all within a specified budget. There are a number of responsibilities that fall to the Nutrition Manager on a daily basis.<sup>3</sup> Below are some examples of duties undertaken in this role.<sup>4</sup>

- Provide oversight on food preparation and food service operations
- Develop department policies and procedures
- Maintain and improve quality standards, implement and evaluate safety standards
- Develop and implement budgets and procure food, equipment, supplies
- Recruit, train, coach, supervise, evaluate food service personnel
- Develop and deliver training and education programs to food service personnel
- Collaborate with interprofessional team members to deliver nutrition care to residents
- Participate in menu planning that follow established criteria and standards and meet individualized nutrition needs, requirements, and resident preferences

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<sup>3</sup> CHA Learning (June 19, 2018). *What is a Nutrition Manager and how do you become one?* Retrieved from <https://www.chalearning.ca/news/nutrition-manager-become-one/>

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Society of Nutrition Managers (2021). *Scope of Practice*. Retrieved from <https://www.csnm.ca/site/scope?nav=03>