

**1) What is a Health Coach?**

- A Health Coach is someone who works with clients to help them take action and implement healthy habits into their life that will allow them to lose weight, gain more energy and/or naturally alleviate symptoms of digestive distress. They also focus on disease prevention, stress reduction and creating balance in all areas of life. Health Coaches take a whole-body, holistic approach to wellness. This means that they go beyond food and diet to explore the many ways that a client can improve their quality of life and find lasting health and happiness. It also means that they consider things like career satisfaction and fulfilling relationships as being influential to client success.

**2) What benefits could I see by working with a Health Coach?**

- Improved physical and mental health
- Healthier eating habits
- Increased energy & vitality
- Sustainable weight loss
- A more positive outlook on life
- Happier relationships in your life
- Empowerment to take control over your own health and well-being

**3) What is the difference between a Health Coach, a Nutritionist and a Registered Dietician?**

- **Health Coach\***

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Health Coaches can work independently in their own business, alongside medical professionals, or in other wellness settings such as yoga studios or wellness centers. The ultimate benefit for someone who works with a Health Coach is the ongoing support and guidance that doctors are rarely able to provide. The certification to become a Health Coach through the Institute for Integrative Nutrition is approximately 1 year, and IIN graduates go on to work in schools, corporate wellness, media & publishing, fitness training, public speaking, government policy, and many other professional environments.

- **Registered Dietitian\***

A Registered Dietitian is someone who has had more formal schooling in the biology and biochemistry of the human body. RD's must complete at least a bachelor's degree, work in a supervisory program for approximately 1 year at a health care facility, and pass a national examination to get their license. While some RD's choose to work independently and run their own practice, many are more likely to work in a conventional medical setting, such as a hospital or public health center, and work with doctors to help patients who have serious health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, or cancer.

Registered Dietitians are overseen by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and must therefore follow a certain set of guidelines in terms of the recommendations they can make to patients. While this ensures a certain level of standard practice, it leaves less room for individualized support and does not take into account the non-dietary aspects of life that facilitate or prevent healing (such as anxiety about work, lack of sleep or adequate hydration, or time for relaxation).

Being in more conventional settings, RD's are generally less able to provide ongoing support to patients, and their focus is more on disease-management and the elimination of symptoms rather than achieving a higher level of thriving in life. The advantage of being a Registered Dietitian is the generally wider acceptance and recognition within the medical field.

- **Nutritionist \***

There are no specific requirements for this term, with the result being that many different types of professionals who have a wide range of experience in wellness and nutrition calling themselves nutritionists. It is more common for Registered Dietitians to use the title, however many Health Coaches do as well. If the field of nutrition interests you, then it helps to put less emphasis on the title itself and more on the environment you'd like to work in, as well as the training requirements you can accommodate, and the philosophy of wellness you personally prescribe to.

\* REFERENCE: Institute for Integrative Nutrition (IIN)

#### 4) **Why would I work with a Health Coach and not my primary care physician?**

- The main reason to see a Health Coach instead of, or in addition to, your primary care physician is to uncover the root cause of your health issues vs. simply treating the symptoms as modern Western medicine typically does. Most MD's receive little to no training in nutrition and functional medicine (i.e. how all aspects of our bodies work together to create a state of ease or disease) and cannot offer patients insight into how basic things like diet and lifestyle affect their health. They are trained to diagnose and treat symptoms of disease vs. looking at the whole being to uncover the root cause of disease.

**5) *Should I continue to see my primary care physician while working with a Health Coach?***

- Yes, if you are under the care of a primary care medical or naturopathic doctor it is highly recommend that you continue to see him or her. A Health Coach is not a doctor trained to diagnose or treat disease or chronic illness. However, they are highly trained in nutrition and dietary theories that allow them to help clients determine which foods work best for their bodies so they can use food as medicine. Health Coaches are also highly trained in coaching clients to look beyond food to assess where targeted lifestyle shifts are needed to reduce stress and risks for chronic disease.

**6) *What can I expect while working with a Health Coach?***

- You can expect to set realistic goals and be held accountable for taking steps to achieve them, learn invaluable information about yourself and your body, learn new habits to living a healthier life, practice self-care techniques on a daily basis, become open to new foods that will transform the way your body functions, and gain confidence in your ability to create new outcomes with your health and wellness.

**7) *What does a typical 1:1 session look like?***

- A typical coaching session will look different for each client, as the structure is set based on your own specific needs and goals. With that said, the first session is geared towards helping clients get crystal clear on what their goals are and what they want to achieve over the course of the program (i.e. 3, 6, 9, 12 months). Once those goals are defined (specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, time-bound), the Health Coach will help the client determine action steps necessary to reach those goals. Each session thereafter will focus on making progress towards the goal(s), removing roadblocks, and possibly re-prioritizing the steps needed to get to where the client wants to go. The Health Coach will share knowledge, tips and useful information, as well as make helpful suggestions that can greatly impact the client's progress towards achieving their goal. Ultimately, the client will decide what works best for their individual situation and what they can realistically incorporate into their daily lives to get the outcomes they desire.

**8) *Does health insurance cover health coaching sessions?***

- Depending on where you live and the type of health insurance coverage you have, you may or may not be eligible for health coaching coverage. Please contact your health insurance provider for more information as well as your chosen Health Coach to confirm it they do/do not accept health insurance.

**9) *How long should I work with a Health Coach?***

- The amount of time you should work with a Health Coach is dependent on your goals and what you want to achieve. The average time it takes to form new habits is

3 months according to a lot of research, so the majority of people will work with a Health Coach for a minimum of 3 months to kick start progress to living a healthier life. After that initial 3 months, you can choose to continue working with your Health Coach to help you take your health to the next level and achieve more long-term goals.

**10) Will I need to adhere to a strict diet while working with a Health Coach?**

- Health coaching is all about YOU defining what will work for you and taking action steps to reach your goals. There is no strict diet as diets are largely unsuccessful unless they are something that you can maintain for the rest of your life. Health Coaches work with their clients to add in nourishing foods and beverages to your diet that will 'crowd out' unhealthier options that have been holding you back from success. Over time, the consistent inclusion of healthier options will become a way of life that is satisfying and nourishing all at the same time.

**11) Will my health coaching session be confidential?**

- YES! Everything discussed between you and your Health Coach is completely private and confidential.

**12) Will I be able to stop taking my medication after working with a Health Coach?**

- If you are currently taking medication while working with a Health Coach, you should continue to work with your primary care physician to monitor if and when you can reduce or completely stop taking your prescribed medication. The majority of chronic diseases are preventable given the proper diet and lifestyle choices, so it is very possible that you will no longer need medication and can begin to transition off of them while working with a Health Coach.

**13) How much time will I need to commit to while working with a Health Coach?**

- The amount of time and effort you put in is ultimately determined by your motivation and drive to take action and make a change in your life. While each coaching session is approximately 1 hour, every hour afterwards is time you can use to make choices and take steps to becoming a healthier, happier YOU! Clients who are committed to making changes and taking action are the ones who see the best results throughout the coaching process and for the rest of their lives. What you get is determined by what you give and the ACTION STEPS you commit to taking. You are the only one who can change your health and your life. Change is not always easy, change does not happen overnight and healthy habits take months and/or years to cultivate and become routine. Every second of everyday should be spent taking baby steps and making progress towards what you want to achieve for your health, your personal wellness and ultimately for your life.

**14) *Is health coaching right for me?***

- Maybe. If you are thinking about working with a Health Coach because you think you should, or because someone in your life is asking you to, then you might not be ready yet to embark on the journey to self-improvement and taking ownership of your health and well being. An ideal client has gotten to a point in his/her life where they are 'fed up' with feeling unhealthy, over-weight or stuck in a rut of symptom management vs. caring for their own health. Typically, people who seek out health coaching have encountered a personal health crisis (trigger event) of their own that has motivated them to gain knowledge and seek support to make long-term, sustainable changes in the way they eat, live and deal with the outside world that will ultimately allow them to move towards thriving vs. surviving. If you are ready to take ACTION and OWNERSHIP of your physical, mental and emotional health, then health coaching is certainly right for you!