

Emily Haller, MS, RDN

Outpatient GI Registered Dietitian



What is your job title?

Outpatient GI Registered Dietitian

Where do you work (setting and/or company)?

Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology,
Michigan Medicine in Ann Arbor, Michigan

How long have you been at this job?

Coming up on 5 years

Please describe your job (including typical role, population served and anything else you feel is important in understanding the job):

I work in an outpatient, adult gastroenterology clinic where I provide individualized nutrition counseling and medical nutrition therapy to patients with a variety of digestive disorders such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Inflammatory Bowel Disease, GERD, Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth, Gastroparesis, Eosinophilic Esophagitis, and Celiac Disease. Just this year we started offering cooking demonstration classes in the Food for Life Kitchen at East Ann Arbor where I have taught a couple low FODMAP classes and a Lower fat, lower fiber class created for people with Gastroparesis.

I also serve as a course director for FOOD: The Main Course to Digestive Health, a 3-day conference for RDs/RDNs, RDs-to-be, and other health professionals who have an interest in caring for patients with gastrointestinal diseases. We started in 2016 with ~70 attendees and this year we hit 200 which is super exciting! The planning and organization are pretty much a year-round thing and something I really enjoy being a part of. This past year we got a website and the year before that we had a logo created - it's cool to look back on the evolution. Check us out: <http://foodthemaincourse.com/>

Does your job require any additional schooling or education?

Not necessarily additional education, but experience is ideal. When I interviewed for my current position, I had my RD, was in an online Master's Degree program, and had

about three and half years of clinical experience. I was recently involved of the hiring process of our second full-time GI dietitian and we wanted someone with a strong clinical background, critical thinking skills, and of course passionate about the job.

What are possible places of employment for your position?

Gastroenterology clinics, private practice

What is your favorite thing about your job?

My favorite thing about my job is that I get to help people improve their GI symptoms, health, and quality of life through food. I really appreciate that my job combines two of my passions/interests which are nutrition science and cooking. I love reading research on food, nutrition, health and the microbiome and I also love cooking. My job is at the intersection of translating evidenced-based nutrition therapies to my patients and teaching them how to prepare nutrient-dense meals that works for them.

What is your least favorite thing about your job?

Outpatient counseling is a sedentary job and I find the amount of sitting we do hard on the body. So, I try to be as active as I can outside of working hours to make up for it.

What is your educational background?

I earned my Bachelor of Science at Indiana University, completed my dietetic internship at the University of Michigan, and my Master's in Science at Central Michigan University.

What is your job/work background?

In addition to working as an inpatient clinical dietitian for 3 and half years, I also started my own private practice while I was working inpatient. I took on clients on the side to make extra money, gain outpatient counseling experience, and make sure it was something I wanted to do. After doing that for about 8 months I started looking for outpatient positions because I really enjoyed it and had grown out of my inpatient interests.

Why/how did you decide to pursue other credentials beyond the RD?

I decided to get my Master's to further my education, make myself more marketable, and invest in myself/my career. I did an internship without a Master's, worked a couple of years to get experience, and then started an online Master's Degree program part-time while I continued to work full-time. I went this route because I

wanted to make sure I knew what I wanted to get my master's in and I wanted to find an employer who offered tuition reimbursement.

What do you think are the most important things for students and/or new RDs to know?

No matter what area of dietetics you practice in it's important to know you will always be learning. It's also okay to not know exactly what you want to do, your interests may change/evolve overtime.

What areas in dietetics do you think will become more important/growing in the future?

I believe the digestive health space will continue to grow. There is a lot of interest in and research going on regarding diet, health, and the microbiome. Additionally, I think Personalized nutrition (nutrigenomics and nutrigenetics), Health at Every Size, efficacy of plant-based nutrition/diets, and sustainable food systems are all important areas that will continue to grow in the future.