

IHS Nutrition & Lifestyle Coach Scope of Practice

What is Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaching (NLC)?

NLC practitioners support individuals in working towards greater wellness and longevity with a focus on creating personalised nutrition, lifestyle and supplement plans with the aim of optimising overall health and wellbeing in the long-term.

IHS Scope of Practice for Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaches

'Scope of practice' refers to the appropriate use of, and boundaries associated with, the process of Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaching. This document seeks to define the rules that must be followed by IHS graduates when engaging in anything related to Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaching.

The boundaries of this scope of practice may include, but are not limited to:

- Coaching an individual – onsite or online
- Coaching a group – onsite or online
- Writing blogs or articles
- Holding or participating in webinars, speaking and educational events
- Communicating online e.g. on forums, on podcasts or similar, in meetings, with colleagues, peers, HCPs

The Role of a Nutrition and Lifestyle Coach as Defined by IHS

IHS Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaches may use the knowledge and skills obtained on their diploma to help evaluate the potential impact of a client's diet and lifestyle on overall health, and educate them towards meeting their wellness goals whilst supporting them as an ally in the process of long-term and sustainable change.

This may involve:

- Analysing and interpreting information gathered from a client about their current nutrition and lifestyle status
- Researching and demonstrating critical thinking when reviewing nutrition and lifestyle-based data/studies, etc
- Using dietary analysis software and / or manual methods to effectively produce personalised analysis reports and meal plans
- Bringing a framework and structure to the NLC process using appropriate paperwork (e.g. education tools such as information sheets, meal ideas, recipes, etc) and other tools to support this
- Helping determine their clients individual and unique goals
- Assisting their clients with the process of planning for change
- Assessing their client's readiness for change
- Exploring the tools and resources available to the client whilst assessing any potential challenges
- Working with clients to establish the best course of action and approach / timeline for change



- Connecting possible nutrition and lifestyle changes to each client's goals and creating staged, realistic, safe potentially effective personalised NLC plans
- Understanding when to use, and effectively instigate, collaboration or referral to a client's GP or similar primary healthcare professional
- Professionally presenting to individuals, groups, and peers in the field of wellness

Suitable Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaching Clients

It is important that both Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaches and their potential clients understand the boundaries of NLC to help manage expectations and keeps both client and coach safe.

Examples of suitable clients for Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaching are those who:

- Would like to improve overall wellness and longevity
- Want to make healthier nutrition and lifestyle choices for themselves and their families
- Need help planning meals and daily activities e.g. what to buy, where to buy, how to prepare and store it, staying within budget, etc.
- Need support in achieving the changes they know they need to do
- Want to ensure they are meeting their personal dietary needs - both now and in the future
- Need guidance to understand nutritional principles and to navigate confusing and conflicting information from different sources
- Would like to manage their weight
- Would like to improve their energy levels
- Would like support to help adopt healthy lifestyle habits such as relaxation techniques, sleep routines, mindfulness, and time for recreation and connection with friends and family

What are the Boundaries of the NLC Qualification?

Boundaries of practice are put in place to keep both client and coach safe. They are designed to clearly outline the limitation of practice associated with Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaching. Nutrition and Lifestyle coaches may not seek to:

- Describe themselves as a dietician or nutritional therapist
- Analyse presenting symptoms or diagnose named conditions
 - NLCs do not have the knowledge and skills to obtain information about a client's symptomology and suggest a diagnosis for their symptoms. This is the role of a medical doctor or similar healthcare professional.
 - NLCs may help clients presenting with some chronic conditions by improving the functioning of the client's body as a whole through nutrition, lifestyle and supplement interventions. However, the aim is not to treat the client's condition directly and clients must also seek advice and support from their GP or other primary healthcare professional. In the case of clients with complex health conditions, we recommend a referral to another healthcare provider.
- Recommend or Interpret laboratory results
 - Where biomedical testing is indicated referral to an appropriate healthcare practitioner is necessary
- Suggest removal of full food groups from an individual's diet



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- NLCs have not developed the level of knowledge and skills to diagnose allergies, intolerances, etc. or to fully address the potential nutrient imbalances which may result.
- NLCs may work with a client who has already removed a food group or comes to them wanting to remove a food group. However, clients wishing to remove multiple foods or food groups from their diet should be referred to another healthcare practitioner.
- NLCs may suggest the reduction not the omission of certain foods or food groups in favour of others for the purpose of variety and diversity.
- Treat or suggest therapeutic interventions (including nutritional) claiming to prevent or cure any named condition
- Use supplements not covered in their training at IHS
 - As a NLC you may use nutritional supplements if they were covered in their IHS training and adhere to our supplement guidelines. Some supplements can contain very high levels of individual nutrients/herbs and other products that should only be prescribed by those with a higher level of training (Nutritional Therapy level or similar).
 - NLCs are also not recommended to use any supplement with clients taking medication. Nutritional supplements can interact with medications a client may be taking so should not be used by a client - unless they have been advised by a primary healthcare professional such as a GP or Pharmacist.
- Recommend therapeutic diets
 - NLCs may use dietary models covered in their training and cannot work with therapeutic level and restrictive diets as these require support from a Nutritional Therapist or dietician.

Seeking collaboration

We encourage all IHS Nutrition and Lifestyle Coaches to actively seek collaborations with other healthcare practitioners such as doctors, dietitians, nutritional therapists and other practitioners and therapists to help foster a collaborative and integrative healthcare system for all.