From your daily smoothie to whether you opt for brown rice or white rice, nutrition impacts everything from your energy levels to your ability to score quality sleep, as well as any exercise goals and recovery efforts. On the flip side, deficiencies in important nutrients can lead to chronic health issues, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer.

However, once you drill down past the basic principles of eating more fruits and veggies, nutrition advice today can be incredibly convoluted, especially since the breadth of the $946 billion industry makes it difficult to keep up with the latest research and expert-backed recommendations. From the latest trendy diet to an influencer pushing a new brand of probiotics, many people find it difficult to wade through the marketing and make science-backed nutritional choices. And while consumers can theoretically turn to experts, such as registered dietitians, to get nutrition recommendations, this expert advice often ignores the unique perspective and needs of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). Part of that marginalization is because 80 percent of registered dietitian nutritionists (R.D.N.) self-identify as white, according to a 2020 study commissioned by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

So, why are BIPOC so underrepresented in dietetics, and why is diversity especially important in the nutrition field? Here’s what you need to know about the widespread whiteness of nutrition.

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