

Registered Dietitians

Everything you need to know about the RD credential

What is a registered dietitian?

Registered dietitians (RDs) are food and nutrition experts who have met academic and professional requirements to qualify for the credential “RD.” In addition to RD credentialing, many states require licensure of registered dietitians to protect the health of the public. State requirements frequently are met through the same education and training required to become an RD.

Requirements for the RD credential include:

- **Complete a minimum of a bachelor’s degree** at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work approved by ADA’s Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE), the only accrediting agency for dietetic education recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council on High Education Accreditation.
- **Complete a CADE-accredited or approved, supervised practice program** at a health-care facility, community agency or a foodservice corporation or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies. Typically, the post-baccalaureate practice program will run six to twelve months in length.
- **Pass a national examination** administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR).
- **Complete continuing professional educational requirements** to maintain registration and ensure that RDs are current on emerging science.

Some RDs hold additional certifications in specialized areas of practice, such as pediatric or renal nutrition, nutrition support and diabetes education. These certifications are awarded through CDR, the credentialing agency for ADA and/or other medical and nutrition organizations and are recognized within the profession.

Where do registered dietitians work?

The majority of registered dietitians work in the treatment and prevention of disease (administering medical nutrition therapy, often part of medical teams), in hospitals, HMOs, private practice long-term care or other health-care facilities. In addition, a large number of registered dietitians work in community and public health settings and academia and research. A growing number of registered dietitians work in the food and nutrition industry, culinary journalism, sports nutrition, agriculture and food systems, public policy, schools, corporate wellness programs, universities and other non-traditional work settings.

The future of registered dietitians

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of registered dietitians is expected to grow as fast as the average for all occupations through 2014 because of the increased emphasis on disease prevention, a growing and aging population and public interest in nutrition. Employment in acute care is expected to show little change because of reduced lengths of hospital stay. Faster growth, however, is anticipated in long-term care, residential-care facilities and physician clinics, along with community-based nutrition interventions like Farm to School and food access disparity reduction.

For more information

Visit www.eatright.org for more information about the American Dietetic Association or to locate a registered dietitian in your area.

Media

Media inquiries may be directed to media@eatright.org or 312/899-4769 or 312/899-4802.

