

EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

*Registered dietitians (RDs) are food and nutrition experts who have met the following criteria to earn the RD credential:

- *Complete a minimum of a bachelor's degree* at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) of The American Dietetic Association (ADA).
- *Complete a CADE-accredited supervised practice program* at a healthcare facility, community agency, or a foodservice corporation, or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies. Typically, a 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.

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, but are not required.

In addition to RD credentialing, many states have regulatory laws for dietitians and nutrition practitioners. Frequently these state requirements are met through the same education and training required to become an RD.

*This information is directly quoted from the American Dietetics Association's Website at http://www.eatright.org/Public/Careers/94_9877.cfm

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Registered dietitians work in a wide variety of employment settings, including health care, business and industry, public health, education, research and private practice.

Many work environments, particularly those in medical and health care settings, require that an individual be credentialed as an RD.

RDs work in:

- *Hospitals, HMOs or other health care facilities*, educating patients about nutrition and administering medical nutrition therapy as part of the health care team. They may also manage the foodservice operations in these settings, as well as in schools, day-care centers, and correctional facilities, overseeing everything from food purchasing and preparation to managing staff.
- *Sports nutrition and corporate wellness programs*, educating clients about the connection between food, fitness, and health.
- *Food and nutrition-related businesses and industries*, working in communications, consumer affairs, public relations, marketing, or product development.
- *Private practice*, working under contract with health care or food companies, or in their own business. RDs may provide services to foodservice or restaurant managers, food vendors, and distributors, or athletes, nursing home residents, or company employees.
- *Community and public health settings* teaching monitoring, and advising the public, and helping to improve their quality of life through healthy eating habits.
- *Universities and medical centers*, teaching physicians, nurses, dietetics students and others the sophisticated science of foods and nutrition.
- *Research areas* in food and pharmaceutical companies, universities, and hospitals, directing or conducting experiments to answer critical nutrition questions and find alternative foods or nutrition recommendations for the public.

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