



## Becoming a Dietetic Technician, Registered

*A Food and Nutrition Practitioner*

### EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Dietetic technicians, registered (DTRs), are trained in food and nutrition and are an integral part of the health care and foodservice management teams. DTRs have met the following criteria to earn the DTR credential:

- **Completed at least a two-year associate's degree** at a U.S. regionally accredited college or university.
- **Completed a dietetic technician program** accredited/approved by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CADE) of the American Dietetic Association (ADA), including 450 hours of supervised practice experience in various community programs, health care and food-service facilities.
- **Passed a national examination** administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR). For more information regarding the examination, refer to CDR's Web site at [www.cdrnet.org](http://www.cdrnet.org).
- **Completed continuing professional educational requirements** to maintain registration.

### COLLEGE COURSE WORK

The associate degree course work for dietetic technicians includes a variety of classes in food and nutrition sciences, foodservice systems management and a range of general science courses.

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Dietetic technicians, registered work independently or in teams with registered dietitians in a variety of employment settings, including health care, business and industry, community/public health, food service and research.

Many work environments require that an individual be credentialed as a DTR.

#### DTRs work in:

- **Hospitals, HMOs, clinics, nursing homes, retirement centers, hospices, home health-care programs and research facilities** helping to treat and prevent disease and administering medical nutrition therapy as an important part of health-care teams.
- **Schools, day-care centers, correctional facilities, restaurants, health-care facilities, corporations and hospitals**, managing employees, purchasing and food preparation and preparing budgets within foodservice operations.
- **WIC programs, public health agencies, Meals on Wheels and community health programs**, developing and teaching nutrition classes for the public.
- **Health clubs, weight management clinics and community wellness centers**, helping to educate clients about the connection between food, fitness and health.
- **Food companies, contract food management companies or food vending and distributing operations** developing menus, overseeing foodservice sanitation and food safety and preparing food labeling information and nutrient analysis.

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## IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A DEGREE

If you already completed college course work or have a degree that is not in dietetics and are interested in becoming a dietetic technician, registered, you should have your college transcript evaluated by the director of a dietetics technician program accredited by CADE. Because the policies, procedures and costs for the transcript evaluation may vary from one institution to another, you may want to contact more than one dietetics program for further information.

The program director will evaluate your previous academic preparation and identify the courses you would need to complete at that school to meet the requirements for taking the registration exam for dietetic technicians.

## SALARIES AND JOB OUTLOOK

According to ADA's 2005 Dietetics Compensation and Benefits Survey, half of all DTRs in the U.S. who have been working in the field full-time for four years or less earn between \$26,500 and \$36,800 per year. Salary levels vary with region, employment setting, geographical location, scope of responsibility and supply of DTRs.

The job market for dietetics technicians, registered is assumed to be similar to that for dietitians and nutritionists. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of dietitians and nutritionists is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2014 because of increased emphasis on disease prevention, a growing and aging population, and public interest in nutrition. Employment in hospitals is expected to show little change because of anticipated slow growth and reduced lengths of hospital stay; however, faster growth is anticipated in nursing homes, residential care facilities and physician clinics.

## FINANCIAL AID

There are many resources to help students in need pay for college. You may be able to obtain a grant or scholarship from a corporation, community or civic group, philanthropic or religious organization or directly from the school or college you are interested in attending. Federal grants and low-interest loans may also be available.

The ADA Foundation (ADAF) offers scholarships to encourage eligible students to enter the field of dietetics. Student members of ADA enrolled in the first year of study in a CADE-accredited dietetic technician program may apply for an ADAF scholarship for use in the second year of study. Contact ADA's Accreditation and Education Programs Team (800/877-1600, ext. 5400 or [education@eatright.org](mailto:education@eatright.org)) for ADAF scholarship information.

## NEED MORE INFORMATION?

ADA's Web site ([www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)), includes additional information about careers in dietetics. Access this information directly at [www.eatright.org/careers.html](http://www.eatright.org/careers.html). The site also lists the dietetics education programs accredited or approved by CADE at [www.eatright.org/cade](http://www.eatright.org/cade).

For other career guidance information, contact ADA's Accreditation and Education Programs Team.

### American Dietetic Association Accreditation and Education Programs Team

120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995

PHONE: 800/ 877-1600, ext. 5400

FAX: 312/ 899-4817

E-MAIL: [education@eatright.org](mailto:education@eatright.org)

