

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 the Academy's Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), the only accrediting agency for dietetic education recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council on High Education Accreditation.
- **Complete an ACEND-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 the Academy, 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.

Visit www.eatright.org for more information about the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics or to locate a registered dietitian in your area.

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



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

Top Ten Reasons

How Registered Dietitians Can Improve the Health of Americans and Save Health Care Dollars

A registered dietitian or “RD” serves as an integral liaison in helping individuals and communities make changes for a healthy delicious diet.

1. You have prediabetes and want to stave off diabetes. A registered dietitian can change your life by teaching you skills that will help you lose and keep off weight and keep diabetes at bay.
2. Your community has high levels of obesity. A registered dietitian can work with public health, government, school and other local leaders to create wellness programs that promote healthful eating and physical activity for everyone.
3. You are a marketing manager for a large food company and know consumers’ preference for good-tasting food that is healthy. A registered dietitian can make the connection and work with your food scientists to develop new products that will be successful in the marketplace.
4. You want to improve your performance in sports. A registered dietitian can help you set goals to achieve results — whether you’re running a marathon, skiing or jogging with your dog.
5. You have had gastric bypass surgery. Since your stomach can only manage small servings, it’s a challenge to get the right amount of nutrients in your body. A registered dietitian will work with you to develop an eating plan for your new needs.
6. You realize you need to feed your family healthier foods but you do not cook. A registered dietitian who has special culinary skills can teach you how to cook in a simple, convenient way.
7. Your teenager has issues with food and eating healthfully. A registered dietitian can assist with eating disorders like anorexia, bulimia and overweight issues.
8. Your community wants more local foods to be available. A registered dietitian can lead efforts to make sure foods will not only be healthy but also will positively affect the local economy.
9. You just had your first child, are concerned the baby is not eating enough and need help and confidence for breastfeeding. A registered dietitian can provide guidance and assurance that you and your infant are getting enough iron, vitamin D, fluoride and B vitamins.
10. Your mother, who is increasing in age, wants to stay in her home. A registered dietitian leading a local congregate dining and home delivered meals program can obtain a nutrition screening to make sure this happens.



To locate a registered dietitian in your area, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at www.eatright.org.
