

Clinical Dietitian



CLINICAL DIETITIAN

- Registered Dietitian (RD)
- Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)

CLINICAL DIETITIAN DEFINED

- Clinical dietitians are Registered Dietitians who specialize in work in healthcare settings.
- The primary role of a clinical dietitian is to design nutrition programs to improve or maintain the health of patients.
- A clinical dietitian is often at the center of the interactions between doctor, patient, and the staff of the facility in which care is administered. Clinical dietitians provide patient contact, counseling, and education to ensure patients' needs are met.

THE WORK

- Assess patients' nutritional and health needs
- Counsel patients on nutrition issues and healthy eating habits
- Develop meal and nutrition plans, taking patients' preferences and budgets into account
- Promote better health by speaking to groups about diet, nutrition, and the relationship between good eating habits and preventing or managing diseases
- Create educational materials about healthy food choices
- Keep up with or contribute to the latest food and nutritional science research
- Document patients' progress

DIETITIAN IMPORTANT QUALITIES

- **Analytical Skills:** Dietitians must keep up to date with the latest food and nutrition research. They should interpret scientific studies and translate nutrition science into practical eating advice.
- **Compassion:** Dietitians must be caring and empathetic when helping clients address health and dietary issues and any related emotions.
- **Listening Skills:** Dietitians must listen carefully to understand clients' goals and concerns. They may work with other healthcare workers as part of a team to improve the health of a patient, and they need to listen to team members when constructing eating plans.
- **Organizational Skills:** Because there are many aspects to the work of dietitians, they should stay organized. Management dietitians, for example, must consider the nutritional needs of their clients, the costs of meals, and access to food. Self-employed dietitians and nutritionists may need to schedule appointments, manage employees, bill insurance companies, and maintain patient files.
- **Problem-solving Skills:** Dietitians must evaluate the health status of patients and determine the most appropriate food choices for a client to improve his or her overall health or manage a disease.
- **Communication Skills:** Dietitians must explain complicated topics in a way that people with less technical knowledge can understand. They must clearly explain eating plans to clients and to other healthcare professionals involved in a patient's care.

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DIETITIAN LOCATION AND PAY

Dietitians and nutritionists held about 68,000 jobs in 2016. The largest employers of dietitians and nutritionists were as follows:

30%	Hospitals: State, Local & private	\$60,210 average salary
14%	Government	\$57,910 average salary
10%	Outpatient Care Centers	\$65,650 average salary
9%	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	\$57,020 average salary
6%	Self-Employed Workers	Salary varies

DIETITIAN EDUCATION PATHWAY

- Accredited education program: Dietitians complete an accredit program at the bachelor's degree level or higher
- Dietetic internship: Dietitians participate in a hands-on internship for a minimum of 1200 supervised pre-professional experience hours.
- Dietetic licensure exam: Dietitians pass an exam to qualify for licensure at the state or national level.

CLINICAL DIETITIAN SAMPLE CURRICULA

FIRST YEAR

Fall: 17 Credit Hours

Special Topics
Nutrition Care Process
Nutrition in Health Promotion
Food Science and Technology
Nutrition in Metabolism
Professional Development
Nutrition Care Process Practicum

Spring: 16 Credit Hours

Medical Nutrition Therapy in Chronic Care
Food Service Management
Nutrition in Growth and Development
Special Topics
Health Care Research
Chronic Care Medical Nutrition Therapy Practicum

Summer: 9 Credit Hours

Medical Nutrition Therapy in Acute Care
Nutrition in Aging
Acute Care Medical Nutrition Therapy Practicum

SECOND YEAR

Fall: 12 Credit Hours

Medical Nutrition Therapy in Pediatrics
Advance Medical Nutrition Therapy Practicum
Education and Community Nutrition Practicum
Food Service Practicum

Spring: 13 Credit Hours

Nutrition in Media communications
Business of Health Care
Integrated Nutrition Practicum

Summer: 4 Credit Hours

Nutrition Research
Special Topics