

Registered Dietitian (Medical Nutrition Therapist)

Nature of the Profession

Registered dietitians (RD)/medical nutrition therapists are food and nutrition experts who work in a wide variety of employment settings, including health care, business, public health, education, research, and private practice.

In health care, registered dietitians/medical nutrition therapists educate patients about nutrition and administer medical nutrition therapy as part of the health care team. They may also teach nurses, physicians, other health care professionals and students about nutrition and its role in patient care. Registered dietitians with an administrative focus may also manage the food service operations in these settings. They may also conduct research relating to nutrition and health in university or private industry settings.

APTITUDES

- Ability to learn the principles of nutritional science and dietetics
- Strong verbal abilities for reading, writing, and communicating
- Ability to keep records, visualize space and form relations, and work with scientific data
- Planning and organizing skills, resourcefulness, and ability to work under pressure
- Ability to supervise and train others
- Ability to get along with a variety of people

EDUCATION

For registered dietitians, the minimum educational requirement is a bachelor's degree and a dietetic internship (900 hours minimum) followed by passing a national exam administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR).

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA

- University of Nebraska – Lincoln (B, M)
- University of Nebraska Medical Center – Omaha (PBC)

LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

To become a registered dietitian, an applicant must complete a baccalaureate degree program and a supervised practice/dietetic internship program, both of which must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the American Dietetic Association. Typically, the supervised practice program /dietetic internship follows the baccalaureate degree program and is six to twelve months in length. Then the applicant must pass a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. To provide medical nutrition therapy in Nebraska, the registered dietitian must become licensed by the Nebraska Board of Examiners in Medical Nutrition Therapy.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Dietetic Association

Web Address: www.eatright.org