



Health Career Directory

Dietetic Technician

Overview

The dietetic technician works with the registered dietitian to provide nutrition care to patients. The dietetic technician works independently with patients at low nutrition risk and, in collaboration with the registered dietitian, with patients at moderate nutrition risk. They are the liaison between foodservice and clinical nutrition.

They assist in planning and implementing nutritional programs and services in facilities such as hospitals and schools. Dietetic technicians may specialize in nutritional care or food service management. Dietetic technicians determine the nutritional needs of their patients by interviewing them and reviewing their medical histories. They help patients plan meals that fit into their prescribed diet and food budget. They also report the patient's progress or any dietary problems to the supervising dietitian.

Dietetic technicians in a food service management role have slightly different activities. Their activities include planning meals and menus for many people, ordering and stocking food and supplies, overseeing the production of meals and services, and maintaining quality control and safety standards. They may also be in charge of designing and implementing new food service systems to make facilities run more efficiently. These individuals may work with computer systems to verify diet orders, record laboratory data, and to calculate payroll. Dietetic technicians, regardless of specialty, are responsible for counselling and educating patients and community groups on proper nutrition that will lead to a healthy and productive lifestyle.

Main role and responsibilities:

- interpret and/or calculate individual therapeutic and special diet orders
- establish and maintain individualized patient files in the dietary computer system
- identify and monitor specific patients to ensure that tray tickets are complete and accurate
- calculate quantity and dilution of enteral feeding formulas as per doctor's prescription.
- interact with patients and family on a daily basis. Handle patients' complaints with food quality/service and communicates problems to dietitians, food service supervisor or nursing staff; evaluate situations and makes discretionary decisions based departmental policies and prudent nutritional practices
- actively participate with Dietetic Interns, etc. with on-the-job training and evaluation
- patient visitation daily; monitor special diets in pantries; supervises department staff in evening
- purchasing and food preparation

- assist in preparing budgets within food service operations
- conduct screens
- gathering data
- prepare meal plans as directed by the dietitians.

Who is suited for this occupation?

Dietetic technicians are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- a genuine interest in caring for people and empathy
- works independently with minimal supervision within a time sensitive work environment
- a genuine interest in caring for people and empathy
- works safely in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, WHMIS, and Food Handler Certificate
- demonstrates accuracy in filling requisitions and assembling trays
- well organized, independent worker who is able to work cooperatively with others
- comfortable with operation of computerized and/or electronic devices
- patient focused, exercising excellent customer service skills
- interest in health care, nutrition, and nutritional supplements
- good communication skills, strong organizational skills, accuracy with details
- ability to solve problems creatively
- enjoy developing and creating tasty, as well as nutritious foods
- see themselves working in a hospital setting, clinic setting, or mental health clinic
- willing to learn, train and do internships to complete your training
- a clean record, no prior criminal background; and
- enjoy working in a team environment.

Who employs Dietetic Technicians?

Dietetic technicians work in urban and rural settings. They most often work in:

- hospitals
- nursing homes
- retirement centers
- home health-care programs
- research facilities
- schools
- day-care centers
- correctional facilities
- restaurants
- corporations
- Meals on Wheels and community health programs
- health clubs
- weight management clinics
- community wellness centers; and
- food companies.

Salary

\$15.66/hour - \$18.55 per hour

Education Requirement to become a Dietetic Technician

The two year diploma program is designed to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and necessary judgment to perform their role as a Dietetic Technician with a Clinical focus. This program combines a study of theory with a clinical practicum experience. The clinical experience will provide students with opportunities to apply and consolidate the knowledge and abilities gained in previous courses. Students develop a firm foundation in patient education, clinical nutrition with an understanding of food services. To enhance critical thinking, decision-making and leadership skills, the program makes use of case studies and presentations. Upon successful completion of the program graduates are prepared to work in a variety of settings.

Career Advancement

Dietetic technician can be a very rewarding profession. Most dietetic technician stay in clinical practice for a long time. This is because they enjoy providing nutritional support to patients and working in a team environment.

Career Benefits of Being a Dietitian/Nutritionist

- Rewarding feeling that you have helped in the prevention and treatment of disease or injury
- Be part of solving food shortage and develop food security initiatives
- Interaction with other health professionals and be part of a team
- Interesting, varied, stimulating, challenging work because new knowledge, and new ways to help motivate clients and patients are always coming up
- Well-respected member of the health care team
- Transportability to work in most parts of the world and opportunities for advancement

Education Programs

Langara College

<http://www.langara.bc.ca/programs-and-courses/index.html>

Financial Aid

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml

Association

Canadian Society of Nutrition Management

<http://www.csnm.ca/site/about?nav=02>