CLINICAL DIETITIAN
Registered Dietitian (RD)
Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)
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.
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

www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dietitians-and-nutritionists.htm#tab-2
• America’s First Dietitian, Sarah Tyson Rorer, was head of the influential Philadelphia Cooking School, a well-known cookbook author, and a magazine publisher. One of the first prominent cooks to be concerned with health issues, Rorer educated herself in chemistry, anatomy, and medicine. She worked with doctors to develop special diets for the sick and malnourished. Because of this work, she is often considered the first American dietitian.

• Rorer worked as an editor at *The Ladies’ Home Journal* for over 14 years, where she wrote on cooking and health issues. This article is part of a series on healthy eating. Even with her scientific background, Rorer was a product of her time; here, she dismisses strawberries, oranges, and most other citrus fruits as “poisons,” warning that children and the infirm should never eat them.

Read [Fruits as Foods and Fruits As Poisons: Domestic Lessons: Number Six](library.missouri.edu/exhibits/food/rorer.html), by S.T. Rorer
• 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.
Dietitians and nutritionists held about 68,000 jobs in 2016. The largest employers of dietitians and nutritionists were as follows:

- **30%**
  - Hospitals: state, local and 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
1. Accredited educational program
Dietitians complete an accredited program at the bachelor’s degree level or higher.

2. Dietetic internship
Dietitians participate in a hands-on internship for a minimum of 1200 supervised pre-professional experience hours.

3. Dietetic licensure exam
Dietitians pass an exam to qualify for licensure at the state or national level.

*Requirement vary by state.
Learn more: www.nutritioned.org/state-requirements.html
Princeton students are most likely to pursue an entry-level master’s degree in preparation for a career in clinical dietetics.

- **Coordinated Programs in Dietetics** incorporate the dietetic internship into the academic program.

- **Didactic Programs in Dietetics** provide the academic background for a dietetic career, and are followed by participation in the dietetic internship.

- Students should research individual programs to understand the nuances in specialties, electives, and other offerings to determine what program is right for them.

*See the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](http://www.allalliedhealthschools.com/nutritionist/how-to-become-a-dietitian/) for a complete list of accredited programs.*
• Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center MS in Public Health / Registered Dietitian Program

• University of Minnesota Public Health Nutrition Program

• University of North Carolina MPH / Registered Dietitian Program

• University of Texas-Southwestern Medical Center Master of Clinical Nutrition – Registered Dietitian Program

• University of Washington Graduate Coordinated Program in Dietetics
Admission requirements

- Bachelor's degree in a nutrition- or science-related field (e.g., nutrition, health, biology, chemistry)
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores
- Personal statement
- Official transcripts from all institutions attended
- Three letters of recommendation
- Personal interview

Prerequisite courses

- Anatomy and physiology (two semesters)
- Organic chemistry
- Biochemistry
- Psychology and/or counseling skills
- Introductory Nutrition

Students must meet the nutrition- or science-related degree requirement in addition to pre-requisite course requirements.

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<td>Nutrition Care Process</td>
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<td>**Spring</td>
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<td>Medical Nutrition Therapy in Chronic Care</td>
<td>Nutrition in Media Communications</td>
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<td>Food Service Management</td>
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<td>Nutrition in Growth and Development</td>
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<td>Special Topics</td>
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<td>Health Care Research</td>
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<td>Chronic Care Medical Nutrition Therapy Practicum</td>
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Common Questions About National Nutrition Month

Get Involved!

www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month
Jessie, a registered dietitian and blogger shares a day in her life working at a VA hospital:

A Day in the Life of a Clinical Dietitian
• Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: EatRight.org
• Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND): EatRightPro.org/ACEND
• NutritionED.org: NutritionED.org
• Commission on Dietetic Registration: CDRnet.org
• Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists: NutritionSpecialists.org
• Today’s Dietitian: TodaysDietitian.com
• Center for Nutrition Advocacy: NutritionAdvocacy.org