

self-employed. Like other business owners, these dentists must provide their own health insurance, life insurance, and retirement benefits.

Related Occupations

Dentists examine, diagnose, prevent, and treat diseases and abnormalities. So do chiropractors, optometrists, physicians and surgeons, podiatrists, psychologists, and veterinarians.

Sources of Additional Information

For information on dentistry as a career and a list of accredited dental schools, contact:

▶ American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation, 211 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Internet: <http://www.ada.org>

For information on admission to dental schools, contact:

▶ American Dental Education Association, 1625 Massachusetts Ave. NW., Washington, DC 20036. Internet: <http://www.adea.org>

The American Dental Association also will furnish a list of State boards of dental examiners. Persons interested in practicing dentistry should obtain the requirements for licensure from the board of dental examiners of the State in which they plan to work.

Prospective dental students should contact the office of student financial aid at the schools to which they apply, in order to obtain information on scholarships, grants, and loans, including Federal financial aid.



Dietitians and nutritionists help prevent and treat illnesses by promoting healthy eating habits.

Dietitians and Nutritionists

(O*NET 29-1031.00)

Significant Points

- Employment of dietitians is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2010 as a result of increasing emphasis on disease prevention through improved health habits.
- Dietitians and nutritionists need at least a bachelor's degree in dietetics, foods and nutrition, food service systems management, or a related area.

Nature of the Work

Dietitians and nutritionists plan food and nutrition programs, and supervise the preparation and serving of meals. They help prevent and treat illnesses by promoting healthy eating habits and suggesting diet modifications, such as less salt for those with high blood pressure or reduced fat and sugar intake for those who are overweight.

Dietitians run food service systems for institutions such as hospitals and schools, promote sound eating habits through education, and conduct research. Major areas of practice include clinical, community, management, and consultant dietetics.

Clinical dietitians provide nutritional services for patients in institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes. They assess patients' nutritional needs, develop and implement nutrition programs, and evaluate and report the results. They also confer with doctors and other healthcare professionals in order to coordinate medical and nutritional needs. Some clinical dietitians specialize in the management of overweight patients, care of the critically ill, or of renal (kidney) and diabetic patients. In addition, clinical dietitians in nursing homes, small hospitals, or correctional facilities also may manage the food service department.

Community dietitians counsel individuals and groups on nutritional practices designed to prevent disease and promote good health. Working in places such as public health clinics, home health agencies, and health maintenance organizations, they evaluate individual needs, develop nutritional care plans, and instruct individuals and their families. Dietitians working in home health agencies provide instruction on grocery shopping and food preparation to the elderly, individuals with special needs, and children.

Increased interest in nutrition has led to opportunities in food manufacturing, advertising, and marketing, in which dietitians analyze foods, prepare literature for distribution, or report on issues such as the nutritional content of recipes, dietary fiber, or vitamin supplements.

Management dietitians oversee large-scale meal planning and preparation in healthcare facilities, company cafeterias, prisons, and schools. They hire, train, and direct other dietitians and food service workers; budget for and purchase food, equipment, and supplies; enforce sanitary and safety regulations; and prepare records and reports.

Consultant dietitians work under contract with healthcare facilities or in their own private practice. They perform nutrition screenings for their clients, and offer advice on diet-related concerns such as weight loss or cholesterol reduction. Some work for wellness programs, sports teams, supermarkets, and other nutrition-related businesses. They may consult with food service managers, providing expertise in sanitation, safety procedures, menu development, budgeting, and planning.

Working Conditions

Most dietitians work a regular 40-hour week, although some work weekends. Many dietitians work part time.

Dietitians and nutritionists usually work in clean, well-lit, and well-ventilated areas. However, some dietitians work in warm, congested kitchens. Many dietitians and nutritionists are on their feet for much of the workday.

Employment

Dietitians and nutritionists held about 49,000 jobs in 2000. More than half were in hospitals, nursing homes, or offices and clinics of physicians.

State and local governments provided about 1 job in 10—mostly in health departments and other public health related areas. Other jobs were in restaurants, social service agencies, residential care

facilities, diet workshops, physical fitness facilities, school systems, colleges and universities, and the Federal Government—mostly in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Some dietitians and nutritionists were employed by firms that provide food services on contract to such facilities as colleges and universities, airlines, correctional facilities, and company cafeterias.

Some dietitians were self-employed, working as consultants to facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes, or providing dietary counseling to individual clients.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

High school students interested in becoming a dietitian or nutritionist should take courses in biology, chemistry, mathematics, health, and communications. Dietitians and nutritionists need at least a bachelor's degree in dietetics, foods and nutrition, food service systems management, or a related area. College students in these majors take courses in foods, nutrition, institution management, chemistry, biochemistry, biology, microbiology, and physiology. Other suggested courses include business, mathematics, statistics, computer science, psychology, sociology, and economics.

Twenty-seven of the 41 States with laws governing dietetics require licensure, 13 require certification, and 1 requires registration. The Commission on Dietetic Registration of the American Dietetic Association (ADA) awards the Registered Dietitian credential to those who pass a certification exam after completing their academic coursework and supervised experience. Because practice requirements vary by State, interested candidates should determine the requirements of the State in which they want to work before sitting for any exam.

As of 2001, there were 234 bachelor's and master's degree programs approved by the ADA's Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE). Supervised practice experience can be acquired in two ways. The first requires completion of an ADA-accredited coordinated program. As of 2001, there were 51 accredited programs, which combined academic and supervised practice experience and generally lasted 4 to 5 years. The second option requires completion of 900 hours of supervised practice experience in any of the 258 CADE-accredited/approved internships. Internships and may be full-time programs lasting 6 to 12 months, or part-time programs lasting 2 years. Students interested in research, advanced clinical positions, or public health may need an advanced degree.

Experienced dietitians may advance to assistant, associate, or director of a dietetic department, or become self-employed. Some dietitians specialize in areas such as renal or pediatric dietetics. Others may leave the occupation to become sales representatives for equipment, pharmaceutical, or food manufacturers.

Job Outlook

Employment of dietitians is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2010 as a result of increasing emphasis on disease prevention through improved dietary habits. A growing and aging population will increase the demand for meals and nutritional counseling in nursing homes, schools, prisons, community health programs, and home healthcare agencies. Public interest in nutrition and the emphasis on health education and prudent lifestyles will also spur demand, especially in management. In addition to employment growth, job openings also will result from the need to replace experienced workers who leave the occupation.

The number of dietitian positions in hospitals is expected to grow slowly as hospitals continue to contract out food service operations. On the other hand, employment is expected to grow fast in contract providers of food services, social services agencies, and offices and clinics of physicians.

Employment growth for dietitians and nutritionists may be somewhat constrained by some employers substituting other workers such as health educators, food service managers, and dietetic technicians. Growth also is constrained by limitations on insurance reimbursement for dietetic services.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of dietitians and nutritionists were \$38,450 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$31,070 and \$45,950 a year. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$23,680, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$54,940 a year. Median annual earnings in hospitals, the industry employing the largest numbers of dietitians and nutritionists, were \$39,450.

According to the American Dietetic Association, median annual income for registered dietitians in 1999 varied by practice area as follows: \$48,810 in consultation and business, \$48,370 in food and nutrition management, \$47,040 in education and research, \$37,990 in community nutrition, and \$37,565 in clinical nutrition. Salaries also vary by years in practice, educational level, geographic region, and size of community.

Related Occupations

Workers in other occupations who may apply the principles of food and nutrition include food service managers, health educators, and registered nurses.

Sources of Additional Information

For a list of academic programs, scholarships, and other information about dietetics, contact:

► The American Dietetic Association, 216 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606-6995. Internet: <http://www.eatright.org>

Occupational Therapists

(O*NET 29-1122.00)

Significant Points

- Employment is projected to increase faster than the average, as rapid growth in the number of middle-aged and elderly individuals increases the demand for therapeutic services.
- Occupational therapists are increasingly taking on supervisory roles.
- More than one-third of occupational therapists work part time.

Nature of the Work

Occupational therapists (OTs) help people improve their ability to perform tasks in their daily living and working environments. They work with individuals who have conditions that are mentally, physically, developmentally, or emotionally disabling. They also help them to develop, recover, or maintain daily living and work skills. Occupational therapists not only help clients improve basic motor functions and reasoning abilities, but also compensate for permanent loss of function. Their goal is to help clients have independent, productive, and satisfying lives.

Occupational therapists assist clients in performing activities of all types, ranging from using a computer, to caring for daily needs such as dressing, cooking, and eating. Physical exercises may be used to increase strength and dexterity, while paper and pencil exercises may be chosen to improve visual acuity and the ability to