**How do I find a preceptor?**

**List of potential ways to locate a preceptor:**

**Who do you know?**

* Reach out to dietitians you know.
* Your DPD director, MNT or community nutrition professor may be able to share some names with you

**Phone calls.**

* Be independent and willing to cold-call!
* Call facilities near where you live or within commuting distance
* It is better to call than email. Emails get lost, ignored or easy to dismiss.

**National Organization (AND) database**

* AND has a database which allows practitioners to register to become potential preceptors

<https://www.eatrightpro.org/find-a-preceptor/?state=ShowSearch>

* Must be an AND member to gain access to this feature. Students do receive a significant discount when enrolling for annual membership.
* This database allows a search to be made by zip code with an option to choose which specific practice areas.

**Social Media**

* Connect with Dietitians through Facebook RD groups
  + RD2RD
* Websites to help locate Rd’s

<https://www.healthprofs.com/us/nutritionists-dietitians?tr=Hdr_Brand>

* Linked in
  + Connect with other RD’s

**Locating hospitals and long-term care centers**

* CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) to access lists of hospitals, nursing homes, inpatient rehabilitation facilities and long-term care hospitals.

<https://data.medicare.gov/>

* Skilled Nursing Facilities locator by state or zip code

<https://www.skillednursingfacilities.org/directory/>

**Private Practice Dietitians**

* Look for private practice or consultant dietitians in your area. Keith & Associates, Inc. is a large consultant company servicing long term care centers, assisted living facilities, skilled nursing homes, rehab units, hospitals, DDSD (Developmentally Disable Services Division) clients, and private pay clients.
* Call facilities near where you live or within commuting distance
* It is better to call than email. Emails get lost, ignored or easy to dismiss.

**Additional tips for locating preceptors specific to each rotation:**

**Nutrition Therapy**

* Try to schedule this rotation first. It is the most difficult to arrange and you may have to take whatever dates they have available to take you.
* Smaller regional hospitals are less likely to be saturated with dietetic interns compared to larger metropolitan hospitals.
* An intensive care unit or parenteral nutrition writing is desirable for clinical rotations but not required.
* A skilled nursing, LTAC (long term acute care) or rehab facility works well to meet the requirements for a nutrition therapy rotation
* Long-term care or nursing homes do meet the criteria requirements for clinical rotations.

**Foodservice**

* The location needs to serve a minimum of 60 meals per day.
* Consider doing it at the same location as your clinical rotation. You are already familiar with that site.
* Public or private schools work well. School districts often have a dietitian or food service manager who supervises the school breakfast and lunch program.
* Consider college food service, Head Start or food banks providing meals-on-wheels or another meal service.
* Inform the preceptor KADDI has developed a curriculum involving assignments designed to benefit the facility. These include doing sanitation surveys, conducting in-service training, developing menus and recipes, and a theme meal.

**Community**

* KADDI requires a minimum of one community site.
* Ideas include schools, public health departments, WIC, senior nutrition sites, SNAP education (often administered by Cooperative Extension), Head Start, grocery stores, YMCAs, cardiac rehab centers or with dietitians in private practice.

**Business & Entrepreneurship**

* You may use any business of your interest
* Ideas include private practice, fitness trainer in private practice, attorney, restaurant owner, or small business owner.

**Tips to prepare yourself when locating a preceptor:**

* When calling clinical sites, use the tips:
  + Hospitals – ask for the nutrition department. Inform them you are a dietetic intern and you would like to talk with either the clinical nutrition manager or one of the dietitians.
* If you go to the facility to meet with the potential preceptor, dress modestly and take your resume with you.
* Additional tips when communicating with your potential preceptor:
  + At the clinical site, ask the RDN how he or she became a dietitian and where they did their supervised practice hours.
  + If you have a compelling reason for doing an internship in their area, share it. Please share with the RDN or other preceptor about the benefits that you can bring to their business. For example: CEU’s for being a preceptor, inservice training that you will provide to the foodservice staff at the site, theme meal that you will put together to offer to the employees and/ or clients at that site, or website development for a business.
  + Please let the dietitian or facility know that you are available to assist with additional tasks to enrich the experience. This may be finishing an educational handout that the RDN’s need to use for CHF patients.
  + Convince the preceptor you are a hard-working, self-starter and that you need to find a facility where you can volunteer to do your supervised practice hours to gain experience and education to become eligible to take the RD exam.
  + Explain which parts of your supervised practice you would like to do at the facility.
  + Be confident and ask for what you need! *Will they take you as an intern?* It is more difficult to tell you no in person than on the phone or by email.
  + If he or she is not the final decision maker, find out if there is someone else you should talk to or make a plan to get back in touch soon to find out the next steps.

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**Summary Sheet & Outline for Rotation Sites**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rotations** | **Requirements** | **Examples of Appropriate Sites** |
| Community | One site preferred | Public health, WIC, school nutrition, Head Start, wellness, grocery store, senior nutrition, YMCA |
| Foodservice | One site preferred; must serve a minimum of 60 meals per day | Public school, hospital or acute care, long-term care, Head Start, Meals on Wheels |
| Nutrition Therapy (preceptor must be a Registered Dietitian) | One or two sites  Required conditions to cover:   * Overweight / obesity * Endocrine disorders * Cancer * Malnutrition and cardiovascular disease * Gastrointestinal and renal diseases | Hospital, long-term acute care, skilled nursing or rehab, dialysis, diabetes center, cancer center, bariatric center, outpatient counseling |
| Entrepreneurship | Someone who can mentor you in how to 1) write a business plan, 2) develop a webpage, 3) use social media for marketing | RDN in private practice, attorney, accountant, small business owner |

\*Organizations where sites are located should have a website. This aids the program in screening.

**NUTRITION THERAPY ASSIGNMENTS**: 392 hours (352 hours completed on site)

* Pre-clinical worksheets: disease-specific summary and clinical & terminology sheets
  + This 40-hours of pre-clinical work must be completed prior to going to the external rotation site
* Nutrition topic study report
* Nutrition-focused physical examination
* Clinical skills evaluation (1)
* Clinical skills evaluation (2)
* Clinical case study report
* Oral case study presentation

**FOODSERVICE ROTATION ASSIGNMENTS**: 192 hours

* Employee training and in-service
* Menu development
* Recipe development and testing
* Safety and sanitation survey
* Theme meal and business plan

**COMMUNITY ROTATION ASSIGNMENTS**: 128 hours

* Client education material development
* Community needs assessment
* Group teaching and curriculum development
* Nutrition education and counseling

**BUSINESS AND ENREPRENEURSHIP CONCENTRATION ASSIGNMENTS**: 160 hours

* Develop a personal business plan
* Develop a business webpage
* Practice using social media