

Dialysis Technician

■ Job Description

Supervised by a nurse or physician, dialysis technicians provide service to individuals with kidney disorders. They run a dialysis machine, which acts as an artificial kidney and cleanses the patient's blood or waste products. Before treatment, the dialysis technician weighs the patient and takes vital signs and blood samples to adjust the dosage of anticoagulating medication. The technician inserts a needle (attached to tubes) into the patient's artery and another into the limb, starts the machine, and monitors the treatment. After treatment, the technician checks the patient's vital signs and sterilizes the equipment.

■ Job Settings

Hospitals, clinics, and other medical facilities

■ Projected Need

Since an aging population will likely increase the incidence of kidney disease, the number of new dialysis technicians is expected to grow at a steady pace over the next several years. This occupation tends to have a high turnover rate, which will also create job openings. Job opportunities will be best for those technicians with the most up to date education and skills.

■ Salaries

Dialysis technicians earn between \$20,800 and \$37,400 per year, depending on their responsibilities, locality and length of service. Technicians who advance to management positions can earn from \$35,000 to \$40,000 per year. Some employers pay higher wages to certified technicians than to those who are not certified.

■ Related Careers

EEG and EKG technicians, surgical technician, perfusionist (cardiopulmonary technician), radiologic technologist, radiation therapy technologist, sonographer, physical therapist assistant, respiratory therapist, and medical assistant

■ Differences in Training

Most dialysis technicians receive on-the-job training. Renal dialysis technology training is offered at Malcolm X College in Chicago.

■ Credentials

The Board of Nephrology Examiners-Nursing and Technology (BONENT) and the National Nephrology Certification Organization (NNCO) offer a voluntary program of certification for nurses and technicians. Certification requirements include a high school diploma or equivalent, and one year of experience or successful completion of an accredited dialysis course. Certified technicians use the title Certified Hemodialysis Technician (CHT). Recertification is required every four years.

■ Advanced Training

Dialysis technicians have limited opportunities for advancement without changing jobs. With further education, they may become physician assistants, renal social workers, renal dietitians, or unit managers.

■ Resources

National Kidney Foundation of Illinois
215 W. Illinois, Suite 1C
Chicago, IL 60610
Phone: 312.321.1500
<http://www.nkfi.org>

National Association of Nephrology
Technicians/Technologists (NANT)
P.O. Box 2307
Dayton, OH 45401-2307
Phone: 937.586.3705
<http://www.dialysistech.org>

Board of Nephrology Examiners-Nursing
and Technology (BONENT)
P.O. Box 15945-282
Lenexa, KS 66285
Phone: 913.541.9077
<http://www.goamp.com/bonent/>