

Someday I'd like to be a...

# Registered Dietitian

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## Meet Tina Schwebach

**Registered Dietitian**  
**WakeMed Health & Hospitals**

*“The ideal person for this job is outgoing, personable, confident, and flexible. This occupation can be complex in that it requires being able to provide medical nutritional therapy to people with a vast range of diseases and conditions.”*

### WHAT A REGISTERED DIETITIAN DOES

A registered dietitian works to improve people’s nutritional knowledge and intake. They deal with issues including food and food safety, child nutrition, nutrition research and advancement, weight monitoring and management, health literacy and education, and the dietary role in aging. Their work environments can range from schools, to private clients, to hospitals.

### A TYPICAL DAY IN MY JOB

I start my day by reviewing the status of my patients and reading their medical records, which list their medical history, physical, doctor’s notes, serum labs, medications, weight changes, and nurse assessments. Next, I visit patients and assess their nutritional needs. I also write orders for a patient’s nutrition support or make recommendations to the doctor. Additionally, I often educate patients who desire to know more, like how their diet affects their medical condition (diabetes, cholesterol, diverticulitis, etc) and the optimal diet for their medical condition. Each day I get to work with new patients.

### WHY I CHOSE TO BE A REGISTERED DIETITIAN

I have always had an interest in how dietary choices affect people’s health. What really convinced me to become a dietitian, though, was my personal experience with one. In my second year of college, my family physician referred me to a registered dietitian to be counseled on hypercholesterolemia or high cholesterol. Before the session was over, I asked the dietitian how I could obtain credentialing to become a registered dietitian. The next semester I was enrolled in the Dietetics program at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point and started working in the Food and Nutrition Services Department at the local hospital.

### THE MOST REWARDING PART OF MY JOB

I love establishing relationships with my patients. It is very gratifying when I help someone become empowered through knowledge and he/she verbalizes plans to take charge of their health. Secondly, it’s very rewarding to advise critically ill patients on their nutritional needs and assist them in becoming well again. I know dietary changes can often improve a patient’s quality of life and extend their lives.

### EDUCATION

I graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point in 1994 with a Dietetics degree and a minor in Health Promotion and Wellness. I completed my nine-month internship at St. Carondelet Health Network in Tucson, Arizona. Afterwards I took the Registered Dietitian exam.

