



Tara Gerke Retail Registered Dietitian



I work within a supermarket and provide health and wellness information and education to customers and associates, both in the store and in the community.

How long have you been a registered dietitian?

I have been working as a registered dietitian for 5 years. I've been with ShopRite for 3.5 years.

Where do you currently work?

I work for RoNetco Supermarkets Inc. at the ShopRite of Succasunna.

How do you spend most of your time at work?

- 1) Individual nutrition counseling with customers/associates
- 2) In-store programs (product demos/sampling, in-store programs and classes)
- 3) Community events and programs (health fairs, presentations, etc.)

Why did you choose this career?

I chose to pursue a career in nutrition and dietetics because I have a passion for living a healthy lifestyle and I enjoy educating others about healthy eating/lifestyle changes. I love food and eating so being able to share this passion with others and encourage healthy habits is a win-win! I love working in the retail setting because people are eager to learn about nutrition and I can put what I teach into practice right away in the store aisles.

What did you do to prepare for this career?

Becoming a registered dietitian requires a degree in nutrition/dietetics (from an accredited university program), followed by an internship (1200+ practice hours), before sitting for a registration exam. Soon, a master's degree will be required to get an internship. Internships are very competitive and it's important to have relevant work/volunteer experience prior to applying.



TARA'S FUN FACTS

My favorite movies are "The American President" and "101 Dalmatians" (the original), and my favorite TV show is "The Office."

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The best part of my job is hearing the success stories! Whether it is weight loss, improving blood sugar or cholesterol levels, or simply getting into the habit of drinking enough water, I love to hear about the positive changes I have helped people make in their lives!

What do you find most challenging about your job?

Nutrition is an ever-changing field, so it can be challenging to stay up to date with the latest science. It can also be challenging to combat the misinformation that people find on the internet or social media.

What is one piece of advice you would give to a young person who is interested in your profession?

Seek out nutrition-related volunteer/shadowing/work experience early on! It will pay off when it comes time to apply for internships.



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