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## Contacts

All questions about the procedures for the gerontological nutrition examination should be directed to:

**Comira**  
**1801 Murchison Drive, Suite 288**  
**Burlingame, CA 94010**  
**Phone: 800-947-4228**  
**Fax: 650-692-9537**

Questions about specialty certification should be directed to:

**Commission on Dietetic Registration**  
**120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000**  
**Chicago, IL 60606**  
**Phone: 800-877-1600 ext 5500**

## CDR GUIDE AND INFORMATION

This Handbook will provide you with the necessary information regarding scheduling your Board Certification as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition examination.

### Introduction

Specialty Board Certification for Registered Dietitians is offered by the **Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR)**, the credentialing agency for the **American Dietetic Association (ADA)** in the areas of:

- **Gerontological Nutrition**
- **Pediatric Nutrition**
- **Renal Nutrition**
- **Sports Dietetics**
- **Oncology Nutrition** (a specialty certification is currently being developed)

Specialty Board Certification is granted in recognition of the applicant's documented practice experience and successful completion of a computerized examination in the specialty area.

There are two examination windows for the Board Certification as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition, one in **summer** and one in **winter**. The examination consists of 150 multiple-choice questions and scenario-based questions. It is essential that you keep the Candidate Handbook readily available for reference until you have successfully completed the examination. You are responsible for knowing its contents.

### Testing Agency

Comira is the professional testing agency retained by CDR to assist in the development, administration, scoring and analysis of this specialty examination.

Comira is a full-service, customer-focused testing provider that blends psychometric expertise, candidate convenience and technical innovation to conduct all aspects of test development, test administration and results management.

### Statement of Nondiscrimination

CDR, the credentialing agency for the ADA and Comira are equal opportunity organizations and do not discriminate among candidates on the basis of race, creed, gender, religion, national origin, disability or marital status.

### Confidentiality

Information about candidates for testing and their examination results are considered confidential. Test question drafts and other materials used to create examination questions (except for test content outlines or reference lists) are secure and confidential. All such materials shall be kept in secure, locked storage, accessible only by authorized personnel, and not disclosed to or shared with others. All questions written and materials developed for questions are considered a "work for hire," and remain the property of CDR. Question writers

are not allowed to conduct “review courses” or other programs designed to prepare candidates to take a CDR Specialty examination. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized by the candidate.

## Examination Appointments

After you have received notification of eligibility from CDR and about one month before the examination dates, you may schedule an examination appointment with Comira by one of the following methods.

1. Schedule Online: The candidate may schedule an examination appointment online at: [www.comiratesting.com](http://www.comiratesting.com)  
Instructions:
2. By Telephone (Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 8:p.m. Eastern Time and Saturday between 11:00 a.m. and 3 p.m. Eastern Time):  
[1-800-947-4228](tel:1-800-947-4228)

Be prepared to confirm a date and to provide your registration number (RD number) as your unique identification number.

Please note that you must schedule your examination appointment at least 3 days prior to your desired examination date. However, the earlier you make your appointment, the more likely you will be able to test at a desired date and/or location.

## Examination Center Locations

Examinations are administered at over 200 locations geographically distributed throughout the United States. A list of examination center locations is available on CDR’s website. Specific address information will be provided when a candidate schedules an examination appointment.

## Holidays

The examinations are not offered on the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents’ Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans’ Day
- Thanksgiving Day (and the following Friday)
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year’s Eve Day

## Special Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities

Candidates requiring special accommodations must contact CDR and Comira at least 15 days prior to examination date. Comira and the testing center will work together to make the necessary accommodations.

## **Failure to Report or Schedule an Examination/Examination Changes**

A candidate who does not schedule his/her examination appointment during the current test administration window may have their application and examination fee transferred to the next test administration free of charge by contacting CDR at 1-800-877-1600, ext. 4705. Candidate's eligibility and examination fee will only extend one test administration window.

A candidate who does not schedule his/her examination appointment after confirmation of eligibility may request a full refund if you do not wish to test during the current or subsequent test administration window. Requests for refunds must be made in writing and mailed, faxed or emailed to CDR. If you wish to take the examination again, you will need to resubmit an application and examination fee.

A candidate who wishes to reschedule/cancel his/her examination appointment, but fails to contact Comira at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled testing session will be required to pay a \$85 fee to reschedule the examination. The fee applies even if the candidate waits until the next test administration window to reschedule their examination appointment. In order to reschedule your examination appointment, you will need to contact CDR at 1-800-877-1600, ext. 4705. Note that your examination

eligibility will expire after the next test administration window.

## **Inclement Weather, Power Failure or Emergency**

If a candidate is unable to take their exam on the examination day due to inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies, candidate must immediately contact Comira and the testing center.

Comira's central computer system shall continue to save data at frequent, regular intervals throughout test navigation. If there is a power failure at the test center, an exam can be resumed very near or at the point of last activity. During a power outage: If a candidate remains at the testing center during the exam down time, the proctor will continue to monitor the candidate's whereabouts and activities. However, once the candidate leaves the testing center, or if a test cannot be resumed until the following day, a new test, in a different form than the originally launched test, will be administered. Please contact Comira immediately should such an event occur.

## **On the Day of Your Examination**

On the day of your examination appointment, report to the examination center 15 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment to allow time for you to sign in, but make sure you arrive no later than your scheduled testing time.

**Candidates who arrive more than 15 minutes after the scheduled testing time will NOT be admitted.**

To gain admission to the examination, a candidate needs to present two forms of government-issued identification, one with a current photograph. Both forms of identification must be current and include the candidate's name and signature.

Acceptable forms of identification include a current:

1. Driver's License with photograph
2. State identification card with photograph
3. Passport
4. Military identification card with photograph
5. Social Security card (secondary form)

Employment ID cards, student ID cards and any type of temporary identification are NOT acceptable as primary identification. Candidates are prohibited from misrepresenting their identities or falsifying information to obtain admission to the examination.

Note: Candidates that do not produce a valid ID at the scheduled appointment will not be allowed to take the examination.

## Security

CDR and Comira maintain examination administration and security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same

opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. Testing locations have both video surveillance and/or proctors in the room.

Please note:

- Examinations are proprietary. No cameras, notes, tape recorders, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), pagers or cellular phones are allowed.
- No calculators of any kind are allowed. (There is a calculator on the computer).
- No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the testing room.
- No personal items, valuables, or weapons are allowed in the room.
- You are responsible for any items left in the reception area or other areas of the examination center.
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the examination.
- Eating, drinking or smoking will not be allowed in the testing areas.
- Candidates will be supplied an accountable number of scratch papers and pencils. Candidates must return all items at the end of the examination to the test proctor.
- When a candidate break is necessary, the candidate must be accompanied by a test proctor (i.e., to the water fountain, or the outer door of the restroom). Candidates leaving the testing room without supervision will have their test terminated. Time

continues uninterrupted during such time.

## Misconduct

Individuals who engage in any of the following conduct may be dismissed from the examination. Their scores will not be reported and they will forfeit their examination fee. Examples include behavior that is violent, disruptive, incidents and allegations of cheating, giving or receiving help, use of books notes or other aids, recording examination questions, using PDAs, cellular phones, etc.

## Copyrighted Examination Questions

All examination questions are the copyrighted property of CDR. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute, or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

## Examination Content

The examination for Board Certification as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition is developed and administered by CDR. Subject matter experts contribute to the development and review of each specialty examination prior to its use. The examination consists of 150 questions including multiple choice and scenario-based questions. Up to 20 of the 150 questions may be pretest questions that will not be used to

compute your score. Pretesting is done to see how well items perform before they can be used in the scored portion of the examination. The pretest questions cannot be distinguished from those that will be scored, so it is important that all questions are answered to the best of your ability. Candidate will have 3 hours to complete the examination.

## Practice Examination

There will be a demo test that will allow you to become familiar with the testing software and its features. The time you use for this demo test is not counted as part of your examination time or score. Please note it is possible that his demo test will not be nutrition related.

## Examination Navigation

Testing software will have: A status window on the top left hand corner indicating time remaining on the exam, number of questions, number of questions answered, and number of questions remaining to answer. Underneath the status window is a question tree, where candidates may advance to any test question by selecting the question number. Underneath the question tree is the question button key which indicates the questions that are unanswered, answered, marked, or marked and answered. The main section of the computer screen will have the question followed by the possible answers. Candidates may select the correct answer by clicking on the blue button next to the answer, or may use the letters on the keyboard (i.e. A B C or D). Questions may also contain expandable

figures. At the bottom of the screen will contain 5 buttons. These buttons allow a candidate to mark and answer, go to the previous question, go to the next question, bring up a 4 function calculator, and finish the exam. Make sure if necessary, you use the scroll bar to view all the answers.

## Candidate Comments

After a candidate completes their exam, candidates will be asked to take a survey and to make their own personal comments and make comments on any item/question.

Once you leave the test center, if you still have comments you may forward your written comments to CDR at [specialists@eatright.org](mailto:specialists@eatright.org). All comments should be sent to CDR no later than five business days after the close of the examination window. Please note the appeal process is different.

## Following the Examination

Score reports will be mailed to candidates approximately 6-8 weeks following the last date of the examination window. Scores are reported in written form only by U.S. mail. Scores are not reported over the telephone, by electronic mail, or by facsimile.

## Pass/Fail Score Determination

The methodology used to set the minimum passing score is the Modified

Angoff method, based upon data gathered during the performance of a Passing Point Study by a panel of experts in the field. The experts evaluated each question on the examination to determine the knowledge and skills required to pass this examination portion. Your ability to pass the examination depends on the knowledge and skill you display, not on the performance of other candidates.

Passing scores may vary slightly for each version of the examination to accommodate for variances in examination difficulty. To ensure fairness to all candidates, a process of statistical equating is used. Slight variations in difficulty level are addressed by adjusting the passing score up or down, depending on the overall difficulty level statistics for the group of scored questions that appear on a particular version of the examination.

## Quality Control/Scoring

Scores are not released to the candidates on the day of testing, so that quality control procedures can be used. Before the final scores are released to the candidate, each examination undergoes quality control checks. A thorough item analysis is completed and is used as a part of the statistical review of the performance of the examination. CDR, Comira and subject matter experts (SME's) review the examination data and candidate comments. All these materials are reviewed during a key validation meeting with SME's to ensure the scoring of the questions is appropriate.

## If You Pass the Examination

All candidates who pass the examination will receive a certification and orientation materials with their score report.

## Re-establishing Examination Eligibility

A candidate does not pass the examination must request an eligibility application for the Board Certification as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition from CDR at the address noted below. Applications from previous examinations or photocopies of applications will not be accepted.

**Commission on Dietetic Registration  
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, IL 60606**

**Phone: 1-800/877-1600, ext 5500**

**E-mail: [cdr@eatright.org](mailto:cdr@eatright.org)**

**Website: [www.cdrnet.org](http://www.cdrnet.org)**

## Appeals Process

The appeals process provides candidates with means by which their concerns about the content, process, or results of assessment can be reviewed and resolved. There is no charge for specialty appeals. Requests for appeals of adverse decisions are evaluated by the Specialty Certification Panel of the Commission on Dietetic Registration. The applicant must submit a written petition within 14 calendar days after receipt of the decision. Letters must include your request, any necessary

documentation, daytime phone number and your registration number. Appeal letters should be sent to:

**Commission on Dietetic Registration  
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, IL 60606-6995  
Attn: Specialty Certification**

## Recertification

At the end of the specialist five-year certification period, specialists who wish to recertify must be a current Registered Dietitian with CDR and:

- Successfully complete an eligibility application – including the required minimum number of specialty practice hours
- Successfully complete a specialty examination
- Submit an application fee

The reasoning for requiring recertification testing is that the Specialty Board Certification is a practice credential, a credential that represents to the public that the certificant possesses the knowledge, skills and experience to function effectively as a specialist in that area. The nature of the knowledge and skills to practice at a specialty level is subject to change due to technological and scientific advances. Recertification testing helps to provide continuing assurance that the certified specialist has indeed maintained their knowledge in the specialty area.

## Sample Questions\*

1. In a facility that emphasizes resident-centered care restaurant-style service, what would be the flow of food?
  - A. Procurement, production, meal reheating, service to the customer
  - B. Procurement, production, hot holding, meal assembly, service to the customer
  - C. Procurement, production, meal assembly, service to the customer
  - D. Procurement, production, hot holding, service to the customer

**Related Task:**

**T125-** Develop foodservice systems that incorporate client/resident-focused needs and preferences.

**Related Knowledge:**

**K140-** Knowledge of standards and guidelines pertaining to food service equipment/water/physical facilities.

2. An 88-year-old woman with a history of Parkinson's disease is admitted to the emergency room from home with confusion and signs of delirium and no recent change in muscular function. Her caregiver assures the admitting nurse that she is compliant with all her medications and saw her physician 10 days earlier. What is the most likely cause of her confusion?
  - A. Malnutrition
  - B. TIA
  - C. Multi-infarct dementia
  - D. Dehydration

**Related Task:**

**T3-** Identify food, fluid and nutrient intake patterns.

**Related Knowledge:**

**K10-** Knowledge of markers of adequate hydration in older adults.

3. Which of the following health behaviors have been shown to lower mortality rates in older adults by 50 percent?
  - A. Mediterranean diet, physical activity and not smoking
  - B. High fiber diet, physical activity and not smoking
  - C. DASH diet, weight training, stress reduction
  - D. Low carbohydrate diet, weight training, prayer

**Related Task:**

**T69-** Identify etiologies of nutritional problems that affect food intake, nutrient intake, nutrition status, and physical activity.

**Related Knowledge:**

**K2-** Knowledge of clinical signs of undernutrition and overnutrition in older adults.

4. Which of the following programs can provide adult care, chore service, transportation, assistive devices, emergency response, nursing, and home-delivered meals?
  - A. Home Health Care Programs
  - B. Medicaid Home and Community-based Service Waivers
  - C. Older Americans Act Programs
  - D. Child and Adult Care Food Programs

**Related Task:**

**T62-** Determine need for referral to nutrition, social services, medical and allied health care professionals.

**Related Knowledge:**

**K73-** Knowledge of community programs providing food and nutrition services to older adults.

5. James is 79-year-old male living alone after the death of his wife two years ago. He lives in a low-income senior apartment and receives a social security check for subsistence. His only relative is a daughter who lives in another state. Recently he was admitted to the hospital for evaluation of weight loss of 15 pounds over the past three months. While hospitalized, he was NPO or on liquid diets for five days. The tests were non-conclusive. He was discharged to his home with diet recommendations. Since James was very weak from the weight loss, the hospital discharge planner asks for your assistance in identifying community nutrition programs and nutrition services to support James in his apartment.

1. List four programs or services the dietitian would recommend.
  - A. Home-delivered meals/Congregate meals when he is stronger
  - B. Outpatient alcohol abuse programs
  - C. Commodity Supplemental Food Program
  - D. Food Bank
  - E. Nutrition counseling through hospital's outpatient clinic
  - F. Community exercise program at local health club
  - G. Nutrition counseling at local health club
  - H. Visiting nurse services
  - I. Food Stamps

2. What are three of the most important resources that James' daughter could call to identify the availability of home- and community-based services for James?

- A. Local newspaper
- B. Home care agency in James' town
- C. The hospital discharge planner
- D. James' physician
- E. Local long-term care facility
- F. Eldercare locator
- G. His neighbor
- H. Local church

3. What are the four most significant concerns for James because of his recent weight loss?

- A. Tooth Decay
- B. Potential altered skin integrity
- C. Orthostatic hypotension
- D. Continued weight loss
- E. Osteopenia
- F. Dehydration
- G. Home safety
- H. Reduced immunity
- I. Cellulitis

**\*Note:** Sample questions do not appear for all areas of the examination. Examination sample questions do not necessarily reflect the difficulty of the examination. It is possible that additional item formats could be used on the examination (such as fill-in the blank, matching items, etc.

Answers:

- |      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 1. C | 5. #1. A, D, E, I |
| 2. D | 5. #2 B, C, F     |
| 3. A | 5. #3 B, D, F, H  |
| 4. B |                   |

## Tips for Taking the Board Certification as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition Examination

Although the following tips do not guarantee success on the specialty examination, we thought these general tips might be helpful to you.

### General Study Tips:

- ☑ Examine the content outline. Choose the area where a review would be beneficial to you and locate these areas in the references to study. Content outlines and references are located in the Candidate Handbook and on CDR's website at the following link:  
<http://www.cdrnet.org/whatsnew/Gerontological.htm>
- ☑ Read over several of the references and perhaps design a grid to help you remember nutrient recommendations.
- ☑ Memorize facts you may need for calculations (e.g., protein and calorie recommendations for age groups).

### Taking the Examination Tips

- ☑ Read every question and all choices carefully before choosing and answer.
- ☑ Make sure if necessary, you use the scroll bar to view all the answers.
- ☑ Don't read too much into the questions. Use common sense in tandem with your expertise.

Remember the answers are based on the reference information and not individual practice as dictated by physicians or facilities where you work, etc.

- ☑ Please note that you are allowed a limited amount of scratch paper at a time. If you need more you will need to ask the proctor for another piece of paper and turn in the previously used paper.
- ☑ Once you leave the test center, if you still have comments you may forward written comments to CDR at [specialists@eatright.org](mailto:specialists@eatright.org). All comments sent to CDR should be to the attention of Specialty Certification and should be sent to CDR no later than five business days after the close of the examination window.
- ☑ Please note that you are not allowed to take purses or personal belongings into the examination room. You are allowed to take restroom breaks, however you are not allowed additional testing time for these breaks.
- ☑ Please note that no calculators are permitted. There will be a "pop-up" calculator in the computer, if needed.
- ☑ Examination room sizes and climates vary, so dress in layers to ensure personal comfort.
- ☑ Get a good night's sleep the night before.
- ☑ After each examination administration, a careful analysis

of the performance of each examination question is conducted and a thorough review is made of the candidate comments. All this information is reviewed by CDR staff, Comira staff and content experts at a key validation meeting, and decisions are made as to any scoring adjustments that are appropriate to improve the performance of the examination. Please note this is one of the reasons that score reports are not given at the test site, but will be sent for 6-8 weeks after the last date of the examination window. This helps to ensure accurate and valid scoring and often benefits test taker.

My Notes: