

# What is a **VETERINARY TECHNICIAN?**

In order to provide quality service, today's veterinary team utilizes the skills of highly-educated and trained professionals known as veterinary technicians. In general, veterinary technicians obtain 2-4 years of post-high school education and have an Associate's or Bachelor's degree in veterinary technology. (The AVMA accredits veterinary technology programs throughout the United States and Canada through their Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities.). Veterinary technicians must pass a credentialing examination and keep up-to-date with continuing education to be credentialed. The credentialing term varies from state to state, with some known as "licensed," (LVT and LVMT), others as "registered," (RVT), others as "certified" (CVT).

In a growing number of arenas, veterinary technicians are called veterinary nurses, as this term alleviates the confusion of the various credentialing terms and more accurately describe the level and types of work these professionals handle every day. In fact, according to the AVMA points out that, "A veterinary technician employed in a veterinary clinic or hospital handles many of the same responsibilities that nurses and other professionals perform for physicians."

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Veterinary technicians work under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian or other scientist. While a veterinary technician can perform a wide variety of tasks, they cannot diagnose, prescribe, perform surgery, or engage in any activity prohibited by a state's veterinary practice act.

## **VETERINARY TECHNICIAN SPECIALTIES**

Some veterinary technicians decide to specialize in a certain area, such as dental technology, anesthesia, internal medicine, emergency and critical care, zoological medicine, or equine veterinary nursing, to name just a few. These professionals enhance their already-deep knowledge with further education and training offered by specialty "academies" that focus on their area of interest. After passing an exam in the specialty area, these veterinary technicians can use their credentials to further their career. For information on NAVTA-approved specialty academies, please visit [www.navta.net/veterinary-technician-specialties](http://www.navta.net/veterinary-technician-specialties).

## **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

There is a high demand for credentialed veterinary technicians. Most commonly, veterinary technicians find rewarding careers in private practice, but exciting opportunities also exist in academia, research and laboratories, government, animal shelters, zoo and wildlife care, livestock management, and many other areas.

NAVTA offers a robust Career Center website where veterinary technicians can find new employment opportunities across the United States. Check it out at [careers.navta.net](http://careers.navta.net).



## **Veterinary technicians handle many tasks, including:**

- Obtaining medical histories
- Collecting specimens and performing laboratory procedures
- Providing specialized nursing care
- Preparing animals, instruments, and equipment for surgery
- Administering and monitoring anesthesia
- Performing diagnostic and medical procedures
- Assisting in surgical procedures
- Performing diagnostic imaging
- Educating clients
- Supervising practice personnel
- Performing dental prophylaxes