

RESPIRATORY THERAPIST



WHAT THEY DO

Respiratory therapists (also known as RTs) care for patients that have trouble breathing. They work with other health care providers to diagnose, treat and manage patients who suffer from chronic heart and lung diseases such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema. They perform and interpret diagnostic breathing and blood tests and develop and implement respiratory therapy care plans for clients. They also monitor and evaluate patient progress and educate patients about lung health to promote their wellbeing.

RTs care for patients of all ages, from infants and children to adults and geriatrics. For example, people who have had heart attacks or who have sleep disorders and infants who are born prematurely might also need respiratory therapy to help them breathe more easily. Part of a respiratory therapist's role includes operating, maintaining and inspecting respiratory therapy equipment such as ventilators, anaesthetic machines, and oxygen delivery devices.

HOW THEY WORK

Respiratory therapists work in a variety of health care settings including hospitals, urgent care centres, clinics, rehabilitation facilities, schools and within clients' homes. Although they may work with minimal supervision and independently with patients, respiratory therapists are as part of an interprofessional team that can include other therapists, technologists, physicians and nurses, as well as staff on inpatient units.

TRAINING

To become an RT you must complete a diploma program. The Northern Alberta and Southern Alberta Institutes of Technology are the two Alberta institutions that offer Respiratory Therapy programs. Respiratory Therapists are regulated by the College and Association of Respiratory Therapists of Alberta.

Respiratory Therapists in Alberta 2019 (CIHI 2019 data)	
SUPPLY	1895
% CHANGE SINCE 2018	+2.3%
RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION	44.0
PROPORTION OF:	
FEMALES	74.2%
MALES	25.8%

VIDEO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUFFYKrI6uA> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUFFYKrI6uA>

RESOURCES

REGULATORY BODY:

College and Association of Respiratory Therapists of Alberta <https://www.carta.ca/>

ALBERTA ALIS PROFILE:

<https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/occupations-in-alberta/occupation-profiles/respiratory-therapist/>

AHS CAREER PROFILE:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/careers/Page11761.aspx>