

Veterinary Technician

The nurse, anesthetist and lab tech of the animal clinic. Two years of college, hands-on every day, and honestly low pay.

TYPICAL PAY

\$50,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$38k to \$62k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Vet clinics, emergency hospitals, farms, research labs

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Grade 12 biology, chemistry, math and English. Many colleges require documented hours in a vet clinic or with animals.
- 2 Accredited veterinary technician diploma** 2 years
Two years at a college accredited by the CVMA (Canadian Veterinary Medical Association). Anatomy, pharmacology, anesthesia, surgical assisting, lab work, radiography and animal handling, with live animals from the first term.
- 3 Write the VTNE (Veterinary Technician National Exam)** After graduation
The same exam used across North America, offered in several testing windows a year.
- 4 Register with your provincial association** A few weeks
For example the OAVT (Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians). That gives you the RVT (registered veterinary technician) title.

Pros and cons

- + Two years and you are doing real medicine
- + Hands-on skills: anesthesia, lab, dental, radiography
- + Every day with animals
- Pay is low for the skill and responsibility
- Physically hard: lifting, bites, scratches, long hours standing
- Euthanasia and grief are part of every week

Good to know

Everything but diagnose, prescribe and cut

A registered veterinary technician can run anesthesia, take X-rays, place catheters, clean teeth and run the lab. The three things reserved for the veterinarian are diagnosing, prescribing and surgery.

The exam is shared with the US

The VTNE (Veterinary Technician National Exam) is written by technicians across Canada and the United States. Your Canadian registration is well understood south of the border.

Optional boosts

VTs (veterinary technician specialist). Emergency and specialty hospitals. Laboratory animal science. Practice manager.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Veterinary technicians, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Registered Veterinary Technologists and Technicians of Canada
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (program accreditation)

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/veterinary-technician>



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