MEDICAL DOCTOR

JOB DESCRIPTION

Medical doctors examine patients to diagnose illnesses, injury, and medical conditions, and

prescribe an appropriate course of treatment. They may also advise patients on how to lead a healthy lifestyle or refer them to specialists for further care. Doctors work in a wide variety of settings, including hospitals, community health centers, and the armed forces.



SALARY

Medical resident ★★★★★
Attending physician ★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Many and varied global opportunities • Medical training is lengthy, but job prospects are good due to the need for health care • Can specialize in a certain type of care and work flexibly

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Medicine • Caring for people • Physics • Chemistry • Biology • Mathematics • Psychology • Anatomy and physiology • Ethics



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A recognized medical degree is required, followed by training in a chosen area and passing required licensing exams.



LIFESTYLE Doctors work long hours and in shifts, especially during the earlier years of their career. Medical practitioners are never fully off duty.



LOCATION Doctors may work in hospitals, general practitioners' offices, or in the community. Some doctors choose to work in the armed forces.



THE REALITIES The medical profession is competitive, and training is long and demanding. Responsibility for patients brings intense scrutiny.

CAREER PATHS

After earning their bachelor's degree, aspiring doctors must take the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) and enroll in medical school, where they will combine internships and hands-on clinical experience with academic study. One or more residencies, which can last up to seven years depending on a person's chosen specialty, follows medical school.

GRADUATE You will need to complete a medical-school degree—entry to which is fiercely competitive—typically lasting four years.



MEDICAL RESIDENT You work and continue study in a residency program, treating patients under an experienced doctor's supervision.





SKILLS GUIDE



Empathy to understand people's problems, a caring approach, and the ability to put people at ease.



Excellent communication skills for explaining diagnoses and treatments to patients with clarity.



Analytical skills for diagnosing the best course of treatment after assessing illness and injury.



Precision and dexterity to carry out both common medical procedures and complex surgery.



Good technical and computer skills to keep records and operate sophisticated medical hardware.

▼ RELATED CAREERS

- NURSE see pp. 278–279
- ▶ PHYSICAL THERAPIST see pp. 288–289
- DIETICIAN/NUTRITIONIST Works with patients who have eating disorders, are underweight or overweight, or have food allergies, creating appropriate treatment programs for them. They are also employed by the food industry to give advice about ingredients and to analyze products.
- PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT Helps doctors diagnose and treat patients, recording medical histories, reporting test results, and compiling plans to manage a patient's treatment. In order to train, candidates need a related degree, or experience as a qualified health professional.



HOSPITAL PHYSICIAN Practices general medicine in a hospital, diagnosing and treating medical problems, usually in adults.



SURGEON Works with a team of medical specialists to treat injuries, diseases, and defects by operating on patients. There are many specialized areas within surgery.



PSYCHIATRIST Works with patients suffering from mental illnesses, diagnosing problems and determining treatment programs that may include medication and counseling.



NON-CLINICAL SPECIALIST

Specializes in an area of medicine that has little contact with patients, such as radiology, pathology, or epidemiology (the study of how disease spreads).

PRIMARY CARE DOCTOR

Based in a practice within a community, they are usually the first point of contact for patients experiencing health problems.



MEDICAL DOCTOR Once qualified and licensed, you will use your specialized training to enter one of more than 60 different areas, such as pediatrics, radiology, anesthetics, surgery, general practice, or psychiatry.



CLINICAL SPECIALIST Practices one area of medicine, such as obstetrics and gynecology, or emergency medicine.