Physicians and Surgeons

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIELD

Physicians and surgeons diagnose and treat injuries or illnesses. Physicians examine patients, take medical histories, prescribe medications, and order, perform, and interpret diagnostic tests. They counsel patients on diet, hygiene, and preventive healthcare. Surgeons operate on patients to treat injuries, such as broken bones, diseases, such as cancerous tumors, and deformities, such as cleft palates.

There are two types of physicians, with corresponding degrees: M.D. (Medical Doctor) and D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine). Both use the same methods of treatment, including drugs and surgery, but D.O.s place additional emphasis on the body's musculoskeletal system, preventive medicine, and holistic (whole-person) patient care. D.O.s are most likely to be primary care physicians, although they can be found in all specialties.

Physicians and surgeons have demanding education and training requirements. Almost all physicians complete at least 4 years of undergraduate school, 4 years of medical school, and, depending on their specialty, 3 to 7 years in internship and residency programs. (Provided by the Occupational Outlook Handbook)

CAREERS

Physicians and Surgeons can work in one or more specialties:
- **Anesthesiologists** focus on the care of surgical patients and on pain relief
- **General internists** diagnose and provide treatment for a range of problems that affect internal organ systems
- **General pediatricians** provide care for infants, children, teenagers, and young adults
- **Psychiatrists** are primary mental health physicians
- **Obstetricians & gynecologists** provide care related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the female reproductive system
- **Surgeons** treat injuries, diseases, and deformities through operations
- Other common specialties include: Allergists, Cardiologists, Dermatologists, Gastroenterologists, Ophthalmologists, Pathologists, and Radiologists

RESOURCES

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Pre-Health Advising Resource at the UA
  [http://clas.arizona.edu/prehealth/advising-resources](http://clas.arizona.edu/prehealth/advising-resources)
- American Medical Association
  [http://www.ama-assn.org/ama](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama)
- American Osteopathic Association
  [http://www.osteopathic.org/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.osteopathic.org/Pages/default.aspx)