



UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

MEDICAL SPECIALTIES

Medical schools prepare students to be any type of physician. After medical school, graduates choose a medical specialty and apply for and attend additional training, as a paid physician. Students who have an idea of the type of specialty they are interested in can keep their motivation for that career high. However, it is likely that you will change your mind many times before finally deciding upon a specialty.

Anesthesiology: These physicians often work on surgical teams, and they are the main caretakers of patients during surgery. An anesthesiologist ensures that patients are anesthetized properly and that all vital signs are at acceptable levels, as well as provide pain management for many types of medical procedures and physical conditions. Residency programs require four years of training after medical school.

Cardiology: Physicians in this field specialize in the functions and diseases of the heart and the accompanying circulatory system. Some focus on hospital surgeries while others work in private offices. The length of this residency is different for physicians with a surgical focus versus an office focus, but it can be from five to seven years. Cardiac surgeons are trained in surgical residency programs.

Emergency Medicine: ER or trauma physicians almost always work in a hospital setting and see a variety of patients everyday. A fast paced career, doctors need to be quick thinking, and make informed decisions in a matter of moments. An ER physician earns an average of \$195,000 per year and residency training is four years after medical school.

Endocrinology: This is the study of the glands and hormones of the body and their related disorders. Physicians work with a wide range of patients varying from small children to the elderly. Those who are interested in the medical application of biochemistry many times find themselves in this field. This is a subspecialty of internal medicine and requires four to five years of residency.

Family Practice: A general field, family practitioners see all types of patients including infants and elderly. Many choose family practice because of the wide diversity of patients and illnesses seen in a given day. These professionals make an average of \$132,000 per year and training requires three years residency.

Geriatrics: The branch of medicine that deals with the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and problems specific to the aged. This specialty will grow as a result of the current rise in the elderly population. This is usually a subspecialty of internal medicine or family practice and often requires additional training during those residency programs.

Internal Medicine: Internists provide long-term, comprehensive care in the office and the hospital, managing both common and complex illness of adolescents, adults, and the elderly. Those in internal medicine earn on average \$147,000 per year and often work in private practice offices. This specialty requires a three year residency program.

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Neurology: This medical science deals with disorders affecting the central and peripheral nervous systems. Neurologists work in offices as consultants to patients' primary care physicians diagnosing patients. Some may work in hospitals, performing surgeries. This is often a subspecialty of internal medicine and some neurologists elect to do a fellowship of one to two years after the completion of a four year residency program.

Obstetrics/Gynecology: Physicians in this specialty treat and diagnose illnesses and physical conditions in women's reproductive systems, including pregnancy, infertility, and birth, as well as diseases of these systems. Some include only gynecology in their practice, and do not deliver babies. Other physicians do both. This residency requires four years of training after medical school.

Oncology: A medical oncologist is a specialist in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and the overall management and care of patients with cancer, which may involve coordinating services and care provided by surgical oncologists, radiation therapy oncologists, gynecological oncologists, and other specialists. While many cancer patients can be diagnosed and treated effectively by general practitioners, internists, or surgeons among others, cancer cases that require special drug therapies or chemotherapy may be referred to a medical oncologist. This is also a subspecialty of pediatrics or internal medicine.

Ophthalmology: Physicians in this specialty focus on the anatomy, function and diseases of the eye and specialize in the medical and surgical treatment of eye disorders, vision measurements for glasses, eye muscle exercises and prevention of blindness and care for the blind. They work in private practice, hospitals and clinics. Residency is four years after medical school.

Pediatrics: Pediatricians treat illnesses in children, ages birth to 21. Children react differently to medications and illnesses than adults, so this area of medicine requires a special knowledge. Pediatricians must complete a three year residency training program, and can practice in a hospital, private practice, clinic or other settings. The mean net income for pediatricians in 1993 was \$135,400.

Psychiatry: Physicians in this specialty focus on the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses ranging from severe and life-threatening disorders, to relatively mild and self-limiting conditions including addictions. They work in private practice, clinics, and hospitals. This is an exciting and growing area of medicine as scientists and doctors learn more about how our brains work. This specialty requires a four year residency program after medical school.

Radiology: The branch of medicine that deals with the use of radioactive substances in diagnosis and treatment of disease. Radiologists usually work closely with the referring physician in making a diagnosis. The average annual salary is \$260,000 for hospital radiologists. Radiology requires a five year training program.

Surgery: This branch of medicine focuses on surgical solutions to medical problems. Physicians can be general surgeons, or subspecialize in other areas, such as thoracic surgery (chest), cardiac surgery (heart), orthopedic surgery (skeletal and muscular system), Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT), etc. General surgery requires a minimum of five years residency training, more is required for subspecialty areas.