



## So You're Interested in Medicine?

Modern medicine generally refers to clinical practice: the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease by a physician. That physician may be an allopathic physician (M.D.) or an osteopathic physician (D.O.). There are three broad categories of physicians: primary care, surgeons, and specialists. Beyond the clinical practice of medicine, there are also physician researchers to study topics related to the science and technology of health care.

### Quick Facts

Sample Job Titles	Median Wages* (2019-2020)**	Required Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family/General Practitioner</li> <li>Surgeon</li> <li>Dermatologist</li> <li>Neurologist</li> <li>Anesthesiologist</li> </ul>	In CA: \$195,000+ In Los Angeles Area: \$152,000+ <small>*Median wages in the medical field differ significantly based on specialization and geographic area of practice.</small> <small>**For current wages, visit <a href="http://CareerOneStop.org/salary">CareerOneStop.org/salary</a></small>	Doctorate Degree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)</li> <li>Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.)</li> </ul>

### The Path to Medicine



Completing a medical degree (M.D. or D.O.) usually takes four years to complete. Two years are dedicated to basic sciences and two years to clinical rotations. In the United States, there are 152 M.D. granting schools and 34 D.O. granting schools. After graduate school, you complete your residency which can last anywhere from three to seven years for sufficient clinical training. Becoming a doctor requires a serious educational and financial commitment.

### Choosing an Undergraduate Major

As with most medical fields, there is **no required undergraduate major** to apply to a Doctor of Medicine program. Additionally, "Pre-Medicine" is not a common undergraduate major. You should give careful consideration to your choice of major and select an area of study that interests you. To apply to graduate school, you will need to complete certain prerequisite courses in science and math. Therefore, common undergraduate majors for students interested in medicine include:

- Biology, microbiology, molecular biology, genetics, or biochemistry
- Math, physics, or chemistry

### How to Prepare for Medicine

As an undergraduate pursuing your bachelor's degree, there are several things you can do to prepare for graduate school. You can begin now as a Citrus College student!

- Complete the **prerequisite coursework** for the M.D./D.O. programs you are interested in. We've included a sample of common prerequisites on the next page of this handout. Prerequisites vary, so be sure to research schools and determine their requirements.
- Maintain a **high GPA**.
- Clinical experience** is not always required, but medical schools prefer students with relevant experience. This demonstrates an applicant's knowledge and commitment to the field. Seek out volunteer and/or work experience in settings that involve close contact with patients, physicians, and other health professionals.
- For students interested in becoming a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, you need to gain an understanding of the Osteopathic philosophy. Many programs required a **letter of recommendation** specifically from an Osteopathic Physician. You can find Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine through [www.ospsc.org](http://www.ospsc.org).
- Join a **pre-med club**, or start one if it doesn't already exist at your college!
- Connect** with faculty and professionals. Remember that most programs will require multiple letters of recommendation.
- Study** for the standardized test(s) required for the programs you will be applying to.



## Sample Prerequisite Courses

In general, all prerequisite courses should be taken for a letter grade. Some campuses may have policies regarding whether their requirements can be met through lower-division or upper-division coursework (Citrus College does not offer upper-division classes; these are courses that must be taken at a university).

Common Prerequisites	Citrus College Courses
One year of English	ENGL 101 & 103 or 104
One year of Biology	BIOL 124 & 125
One year of General Chemistry	CHEM 111 & 112
One year of Organic Chemistry	CHEM 210/211 & 220/221
One year of Physics	PHYS 201 & 202 or 203*
	<small>*Some campuses may accept PHYS 111 &amp; 112. Refer to program specific websites for more information.</small>
One year of Math	MATH 190 or 191

**IMPORTANT:** This list is meant to be used as an informational guide. All students must refer to the individual campuses/programs for specific information on prerequisite requirements.

## Medical School Application Process

- Apply to multiple M.D. programs using the American Medical College Application System (AMCAS) or D.O. programs through the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application System (AACOMAS).
- Most schools require students to take the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). The new MCAT (introduced in 2015) is organized around testing students on their ability to problem solve, based on 10 foundational competencies and core content from the natural, behavioral and social sciences, and apply critical analysis and reasoning skills.

## Resources

### Professional Organizations

- Association of American Medical Colleges ([aspiringdocs.org](http://aspiringdocs.org) & [aamc.org](http://aamc.org))
- American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine ([aacom.org](http://aacom.org))

### Podcasts

- AMA Doc Talk ([ama-assn.org/podcasts](http://ama-assn.org/podcasts))
- Making the Rounds ([ama-assn.org/podcasts](http://ama-assn.org/podcasts))
- Moving Medicine ([ama-assn.org/podcasts](http://ama-assn.org/podcasts))

Visit **CandidCareer** to learn more about this occupation from the perspective of current physicians!

**[bit.ly/CandidPhysicians](https://bit.ly/CandidPhysicians)**

## Related Occupations

Not sure if getting a doctoral degree in medicine is the right fit for you? Here are some related careers with different educational requirements. For more information on these careers or others, visit ONetOnline.org.

Job Title	Median Wages	Required Education	Holland Interest Code
Physician Assistant	In CA: \$118,500	Master's Degree	SIR
Nurse Practitioner	In CA: \$126,890	Master's Degree	SIR
Registered Nurse	In CA: \$104,410	Associate's Degree	SIC
Medical Assistant	In CA: \$36,080	Certificate	SCR