

PHYSICIAN

Entry Level: Doctoral or Professional Degree

***Please Note:** BYU has premedical advisement for students that are interested in becoming physicians: <https://ppa.byu.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/PreparingForMedicalSchoolCoursework.pdf>.

A physician, or medical doctor, leads the medical care team, treating patients as the primary healthcare provider. A doctor diagnoses and treats diseases and conditions, as well as provides treatment in many forms including medication, procedures, surgery, or therapy. The physician shoulders the highest degree of responsibility of coordinating the patient's medical treatment from beginning to end, analyzing the patient's symptoms and conditions, and managing their care for the best results and recovery.³

JOB REQUIREMENTS

What is the exact job title?

- Physician
- Doctor of Medicine
- Medical Practitioner

How do I become one?

- Physicians have demanding education and training requirements. Physicians typically need a bachelor's degree, a degree from a medical school, which takes 4 years to complete, and, depending on their specialty, 3 to 7 years in internship and residency programs.¹

What qualities do I need?

- Communication skills: Physicians need to be excellent communicators. They must communicate effectively with their patients and other healthcare support staff.¹
- Compassion: Patients who are sick or injured may be in extreme pain or distress. Physicians must treat patients and their families with compassion and understanding.¹
- Detail oriented: Patients must receive appropriate treatment and medications. Physicians must accurately monitor and record various pieces of information related to patient care.¹
- Dexterity: Physicians may work with very precise and sometimes sharp tools, and mistakes can have serious consequences.¹
- Leadership skills: Physicians who work in their own practice must manage a staff of other professionals.¹
- Organizational skills: Good recordkeeping and other organizational skills are critical in both medical and business settings.¹
- Patience: Physicians may work for long periods with patients who need special attention. Persons who fear medical treatment may require more patience.¹
- Physical stamina: Physicians should be comfortable lifting or turning disabled patients, or performing other physical tasks.¹
- Problem-solving skills: Physicians need to evaluate patients' symptoms and administer the appropriate treatments. They need to do this quickly if a patient's life is threatened.¹

1<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physicians-and-surgeons.htm>

2https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Physician_%2F_Doctor%2C_General_Practice/Salary

3<https://www.verywellhealth.com/physician-career-profile-1736174>

4<https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/how-many-hours-are-average-physician-workweek>

TYPICAL WORK DAY

What do they do?

- Take a patient's medical history.¹
- Update charts and patient information to show current findings and treatments.¹
- Order tests for nurses or other healthcare staff to perform.¹
- Review test results to identify any abnormal findings.¹
- Recommend and design a plan of treatment.¹
- Address concerns or answer questions that patients have about their health and well-being.¹
- Help patients take care of their health by discussing topics such as proper nutrition and hygiene.¹

Where do they normally work?

- About half of physicians in physicians' offices in 2016. Others worked in hospitals, in academia, or for the government.¹

What hours do they work?

- Most physicians work between 40 and 60 hours per week, but nearly one-quarter of physicians work between 61 and 80 hours per week, according to the 2014 Work/Life Profiles of Today's Physician released last year by AMA Insurance.⁴

BENEFITS

What is a typical salary in this field?

- BLS: Pay depends on the exact title. In 2018, median was equal or greater than \$208,000/year.¹
- Payscale: \$82.88/hour or \$146,905/year.²

Does this job come with any benefits? (vision, dental, 401k, PTO, etc.)

- Medical: 75%²
- Vision: 48%²
- Dental: 57%²
- None: 23%²

GROWTH

What is the projected job growth?

- Between 2018 - 2028, job growth is projected to be 7%.¹

Last Updated: October 2019

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