



CAREERS IN

HEALTH



SPONSORED BY



CAREERS IN HEALTH

Have you ever wanted to be a doctor? A nurse? 3

Education: Good for your health care career 4

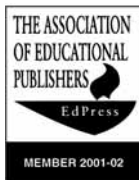
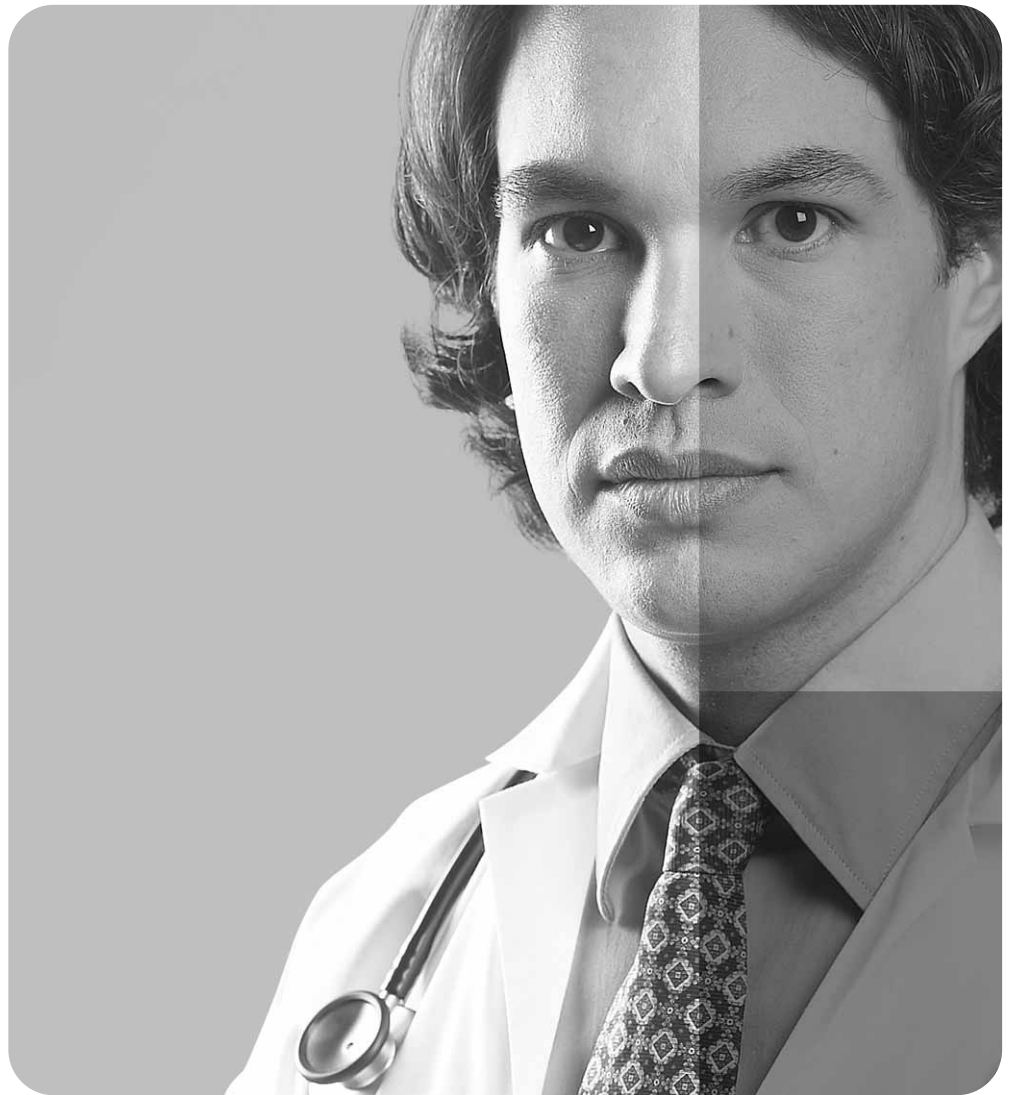
Healthy outlook on higher education 6

Nursing: A caring touch of medicine 8

Physical therapy puts the spring back in patients' steps 9

Optometry and ophthalmology: See the difference? 10

Medical assistants do it all (well, practically!) 11



Written by Julie Smead
Design & Illustration by
Pyrographic Media
Original Photography by Hemera,
PhotoDisc® and Photos.com
© 2005-2006 KRP, Inc.
All rights reserved.



HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO BE A DOCTOR? A NURSE?



If you like the idea of caring for people and keeping them healthy, you may have said 'yes.' If you also enjoy subjects like science, biology, and chemistry, you may have said 'yes.'

While medicine and nursing are noble career choices, they aren't the only ones related to health care. There are hundreds of options.

In fact, more Americans today work in health-care-related jobs than in any other field. And the trend is expected to continue. New technologies, plus a growing aged population, are likely to create new health care jobs for years to come.

And, just in case you were curious, not every health care job involves blood or exposure to illness! Some health care workers rarely encounter patients at all.

For instance, medical office managers organize patient records and other data in doctors' offices, while biomedical engineers design and create highly specialized instruments for a variety of uses.

Technicians specialize in operating, repairing and maintaining medical equipment. Health care administrators make sure a medical facility runs smoothly, from hiring and paying staff, to setting up company policies, to maintaining the operation of the building itself, and more.

So, even if you don't want to be a doctor or a nurse, but WOULD like to help people be healthy, take heart! The health care field is mapped with countless avenues of employment. One may turn out to be YOUR own rewarding path!

Break it down

Health care careers fall into five general categories.

1) **Medicine:** Includes physicians who concentrate in a particular area. Here's just a sample of specialties:

Allergy and Immunology
Anesthesiology
Dermatology
Emergency Medicine
Family Practice
Internal Medicine
Neurology
Obstetrics and Gynecology
Ophthalmology
Pediatrics
Psychiatry

2) **Nursing:** A field dealing with direct patient care. Jobs include nurses' aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses and RNs with advanced education or experience in a particular area of medicine.

Dental: Includes Doctors of Dentistry, dental hygienists, dental assistants, dental lab technicians, and others.

4) **Optometry:** These doctors are the "family doctors" for eye and vision problems. They help you see your best and keep your eyes healthy.

5) **Pharmacy:** Employees in this field deal with the proper monitoring, maintaining and dispensing of pharmacological substances.

6) **Allied Health:** Most other health care workers fall into this category. They are health care practitioners with some formal education, clinical training or specialized experience. They are usually credentialed through certification, registration, and/or licensure. Jobs range from athletic trainer to radiology or x-ray technologist.

Activities

- Look through the employment section of your newspaper. Is there a special section for medicine and health-care-related careers? What percentage of health care jobs fall under each category listed above? What does that tell you about health care jobs? Discuss with your class.
- While searching the newspaper or reading through this supplement, jot down any health-care-related job titles you do not understand. Later, find out what they mean. Compare notes with your classmates. Do any of these jobs interest you?

EDUCATION: GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE CAREER



Practice healthy study habits ... now

The health care field is built on a foundation of science, medicine, specialized knowledge, high-tech equipment and advanced procedures. That means, most jobs in health care require more training and/or education than a high school diploma.

But not every health care career requires an advanced university degree. Some call for just a year or two of study beyond high school graduation. Others require a certificate that may be earned in only a few months.

However, if you plan to become a medical doctor, dentist, optometrist, psychologist, or medical engineer, for example, plan to attend school for more than four years after graduating from high school.

Regardless of which health care career you choose, the time to start preparing is in middle school and high school. Begin by doing well in algebra, geometry, math, science, computer, social studies and English courses.

Challenge yourself by taking the most difficult courses in which you think you can succeed. This will exercise your mind to tackle more advanced subjects in college or technical/vocational school. Some courses to consider include: biology, chemistry, computer science, economics, Latin, calculus, physics and psychology.

Talk with a teacher or guidance counselor about your ideas. He or she can help make sure you're taking the courses you need to prepare for your future education. Work hard to get the best grades possible and have fun! If you're having trouble, seek help. Don't be embarrassed to ask for a tutor or to attend summer school.

Take your pulse

By your junior year of high school, you will probably have a good idea whether you plan to continue your education after graduation.

To learn what kind of training or education is required for which career, do some research. Work with a guidance counselor or teacher. Find out which schools in your area offer the programs you want. You may have to attend school in another city or state. Begin by studying the "Careers and Requirements" pages in the middle of this supplement.

Volunteering pays in experience

Working in health care may sound interesting. You'll never know what it's like until you try it. Fortunately, you don't have to wait until you graduate for that opportunity!

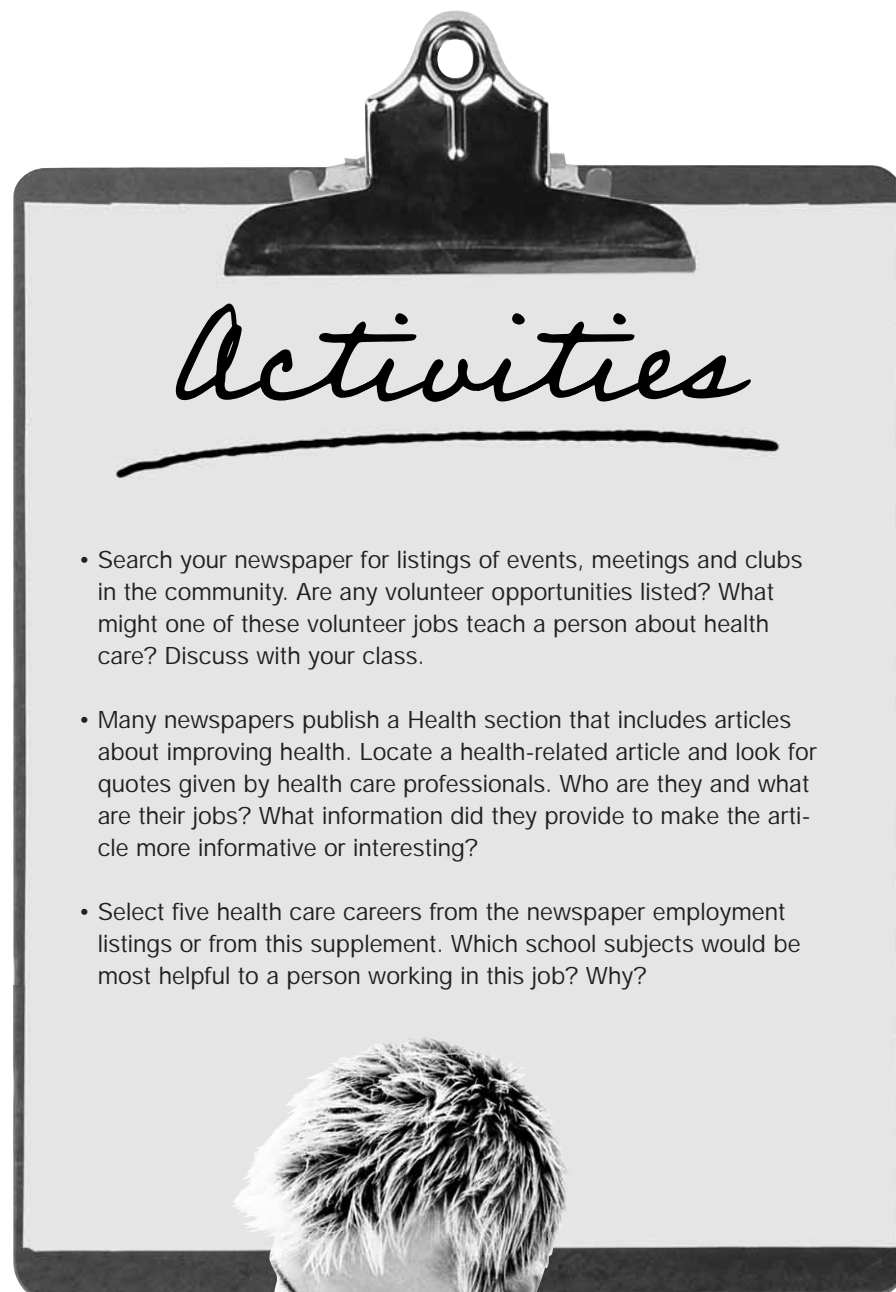
Volunteering at a local hospital, clinic, doctor's office, health department, related business, or other medical facility gives you valuable experience and inside knowledge about a job. Even if your duties aren't really related to your career of interest, you'll work in the same general atmosphere and observe activity around you. All of this watching and experiencing will help form your decision about which career to pursue.

'Shadowing' is also an excellent idea. It's a chance to be the "shadow" of a working professional for a day to observe exactly what they do.

Due to safety concerns, it may not be possible to shadow a surgeon or emergency medical technician, for instance. But it may be possible with many other health-care-related jobs.

Ask a teacher or guidance counselor to help you locate a professional. Contact him or her and politely ask to 'shadow' them for one day while they work. You may want to send a carefully prepared letter first, to introduce yourself before telephoning.

Remember to dress appropriately. When in doubt, dress up!



HEALTHY OUTLOOK ON HIGHER EDUCATION

There are numerous health care careers and almost as many kinds of training and education required to get them.

Because so many health care jobs deal with technical terminology, equipment or medicine on a daily basis, training beyond high school is usually required.

Where to start

It helps to know the difference between various schools of higher learning. Admission to some schools is competitive and requires an exceptional high school grade point average. Others are more flexible. Financial costs vary, too.

Liberal arts colleges

A liberal arts education includes a wide range of courses, from art, history and philosophy to psychology, biology, geology, math and more. Such colleges focus on the education of undergraduate students in small, personal settings. Two- and four-year degrees may be earned.

Universities

These are larger schools that include a liberal arts college, plus professional colleges and graduate programs. Universities offer two- and four-year undergraduate degrees as well as master's and doctoral degree programs.

Technical, vocational and professional schools

These are schools for students who want to learn a specific trade or skill, typically in one or two years.

Community or junior colleges

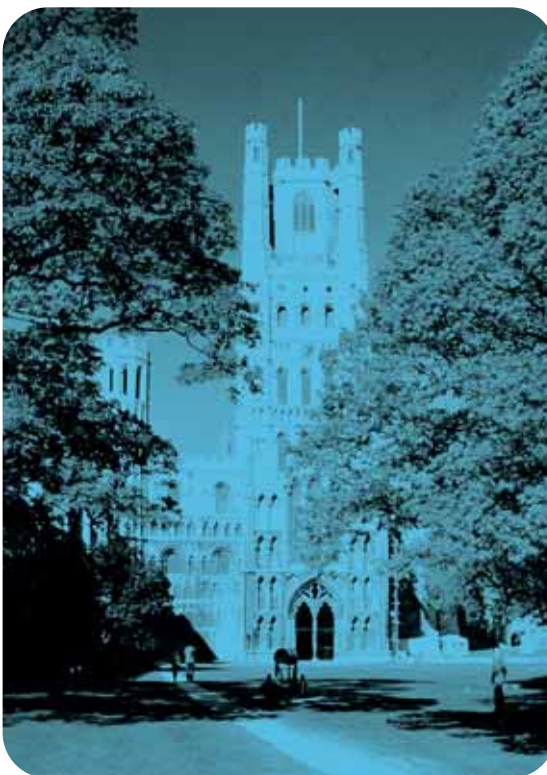
These generally offer the first two years of a liberal arts education, plus specialized trade or job preparation.

Non-traditional classrooms

Branches of the U.S. military offer health care degrees, training and education to recruits.

It's also possible for a high school graduate to be hired into a low-level position at a hospital — in food service, nursing or general maintenance — and work toward certification in a health care-related area while employed. Many hospitals offer medical technology programs. Employees of some medical facilities may also earn college tuition through their employer or receive loans that are forgiven by the employer so long as employees continue to work at the facility after completion of their college education. Both are good routes to explore if you want to pursue training while employed.

See pages 8 through 11 of this section for educational requirements for a variety of positions.



Help with tuition

Grants, scholarships, loans and work/study programs are available for high school graduates. Check with your guidance office for more details or visit the U.S. Department of Education's Web site at www.ed.gov/fund. For additional help with college tuition visit <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/kidscareers/about.htm>.

Job fairs

Many communities hold regular job fairs. These events bring in employers from many different fields to talk about their line of work and job openings within those fields. Job fairs usually advertise in the local newspaper. Keep your eye out for a job fair advertisement, then plan to attend the fair with members of your class. Seek out health care professionals at the fair and ask them about career possibilities. Prepare a list of questions to ask ahead of time.

For help with grants, scholarships, loans and work/study programs, visit the U.S. Department of Education's web site, www.ed.gov/fund

Activities

- Look through the classifieds employment ads of your newspaper. Choose 10 different job ads that interest you. What kind of education is required for each? Where would a person get such education? How many years would it take?
- Make a list of jobs that interest you. Visit your high school guidance office or library to learn whether colleges, universities or technical and vocational schools in your area offer related study programs.
- Look in the telephone book under schools or colleges. Find a technical, vocational, community or other college in your neighborhood. List 10 questions you'd like to ask someone at this school about health-care-related study programs. Call and arrange a telephone interview with someone in the admissions office. Write a newspaper article about your discoveries.
- If you don't know what kind of job you want someday, you do know what you enjoy. For example, do you want to work inside or outside? Around people or mostly on your own? Do you like to help others or work as part of a team to produce results? Think of the adults you know and the jobs they have. Whose jobs do you admire most and why? What is it about their job that interests you? Jot down your notes and share with the class.
- Many health-care-related jobs involve contact with patients or people who require immediate attention. Make a list of job titles you think would involve the most contact with patients. Then, make another list of health care jobs you think would have the least contact with patients. Which jobs appeal to you most and why?
- When you think of health care, do you think of sick people? Or do you think of keeping people healthy? Can you name some health-care-related jobs that focus on keeping people healthy as opposed to treating their illnesses?
- Browse the sports section of the newspaper. Which health-care-related careers might deal with professional athletes? Make a list and discuss with your class.
- A profile is a newspaper feature (non-news) article that introduces the reader to a person of interest. Make a list of five health care careers that interest you. With your teacher's help, find a local professional working in one of these jobs. Prepare a list of questions and interview a professional about the work he or she does, how he or she became interested in doing it and how he or she prepared for that career, either through training, experience or education. Write a newspaper feature article, or profile, on him or her. If you need an example of how a profile article is written, find one in your newspaper and match the writing style.



NURSING: A CARING TOUCH OF MEDICINE



Nursing is the largest health-care occupation in the United States. Nurses treat and care for the sick, injured, disabled and convalescent in a variety of settings. They also promote healthy lifestyles and behaviors in their communities.

Nurses work in hospitals, clinics, physicians' offices, nursing homes, specialized treatment centers, private residences and many other clinical and non-clinical settings. Their duties vary from basic procedures, such as giving medications, to providing primary care to patients in office settings similar to physicians.

State laws regulate what nurses can and cannot do. But work settings usually determine job duties. Nurses watch and record patient symptoms, reactions and day-to-day progress. They give medications and help physicians during treatments and exams. Nurses also create care plans and supervise nursing aides. Nurses with advanced degrees work in settings similar to primary care physicians such as pediatricians, family practice physicians and obstetricians/gynecologists.

Registered nurses (RNs) must graduate from an approved nursing program and pass a national nursing license exam. Registered nursing programs range from a two-year associate's degree to a four- or five-year bachelor's degree. Later, many RNs return to school for advanced degrees so they can specialize in an area of medicine or work as administrators.

RNs differ from licensed practical nurses (LPNs) in that their education is more extensive and theory-based, allowing them to make unsupervised professional judgments regarding the status of a patient's health. RNs also perform duties that LPNs cannot, such as administering certain intravenous drugs.

Overall, nurses' earnings are above average compared to many occupations, especially for advanced-practice nurses who have additional education or training.



PROFILES

Nursing is the largest health-care occupation in the United States.





PHYSICAL THERAPY PUTS THE SPRING BACK IN PATIENTS' STEPS

Every day, physical therapists help people regain control of their lives. They help accident victims walk again. They help pregnant women lessen the discomfort of childbearing. They apply treatments and teach exercises to people with long-term back pain to eventually correct the problem.

Physical therapy treatments involve massage, manipulation, exercises, cold, heat, hydrotherapy, electric stimulation and light. These treatments help prevent permanent disability and restore normal body function after an injury or illness. For many patients, the goal is to perform tasks in ways that allow them to live independently.

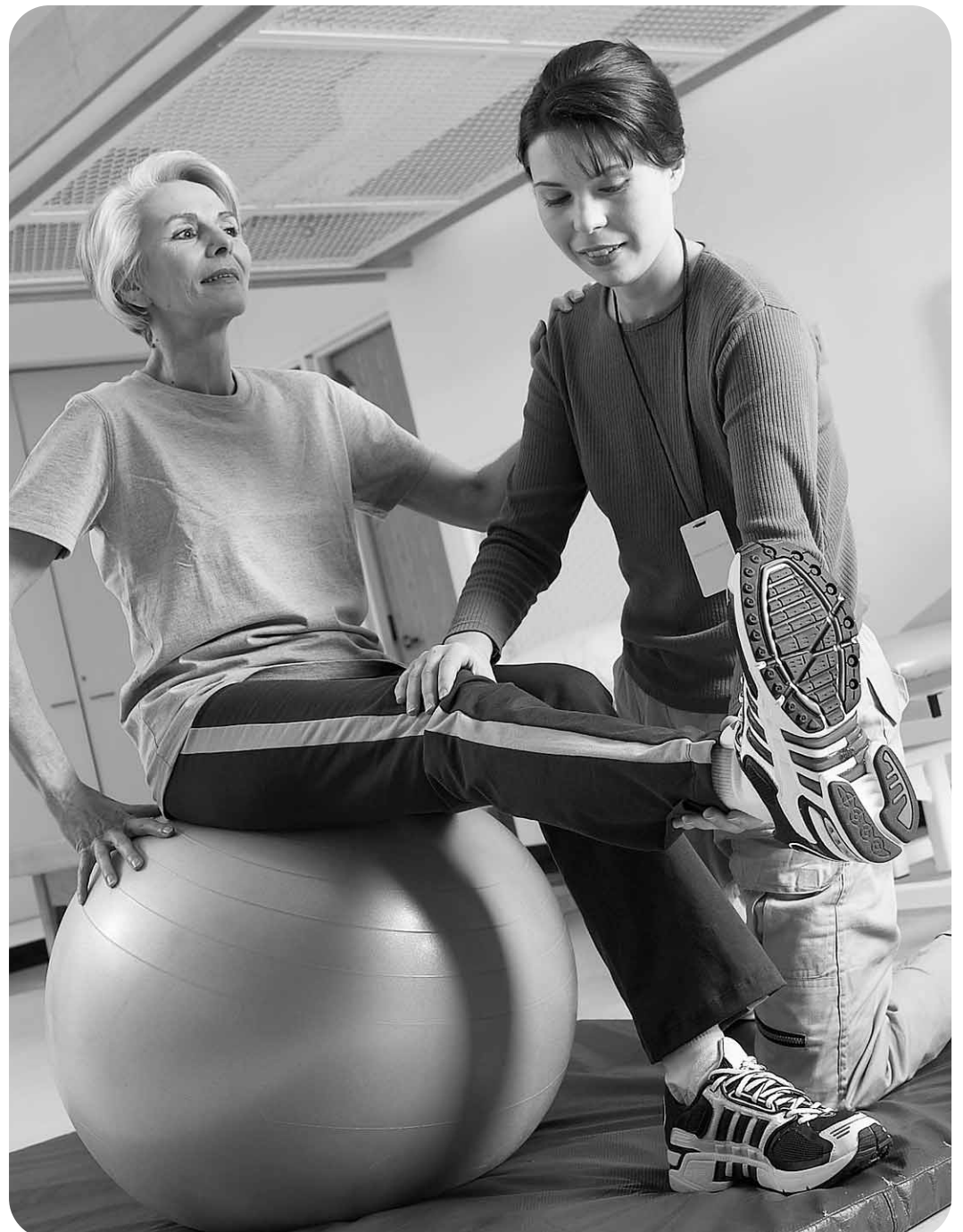
A physical therapist or physical therapist assistant works in a hospital, clinic, private office or home-health setting. They work with physicians, dentists, nurses, educators, social workers, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists and audiologists to give total care to a patient.

Some physical therapists treat a wide range of ailments while others specialize in pediatrics, geriatrics, orthopedics, sports medicine, neurology or cardiopulmonary physical therapy.

Physical therapist assistants work under the supervision of a physical therapist. They help with treatments, procedures, and tests and prepare patients for therapy.

Most physical therapists are employed in hospitals or physical therapist offices. Others work in home health agencies, outpatient rehabilitation centers, physicians' clinics and nursing homes. Some physical therapists are self-employed in private practice.

All states require physical therapists to pass a licensure exam after graduating from an accredited physical therapist educational program before they can practice.



OPTOMETRY AND OPHTHALMOLOGY SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

An optometrist is a doctor who examines people's eyes for vision problems, diseases and other issues. Optometrists write prescriptions for eyeglasses, contact lenses and medications needed to treat disease. They typically use lenses, prisms and vision therapy to improve a patient's sight.

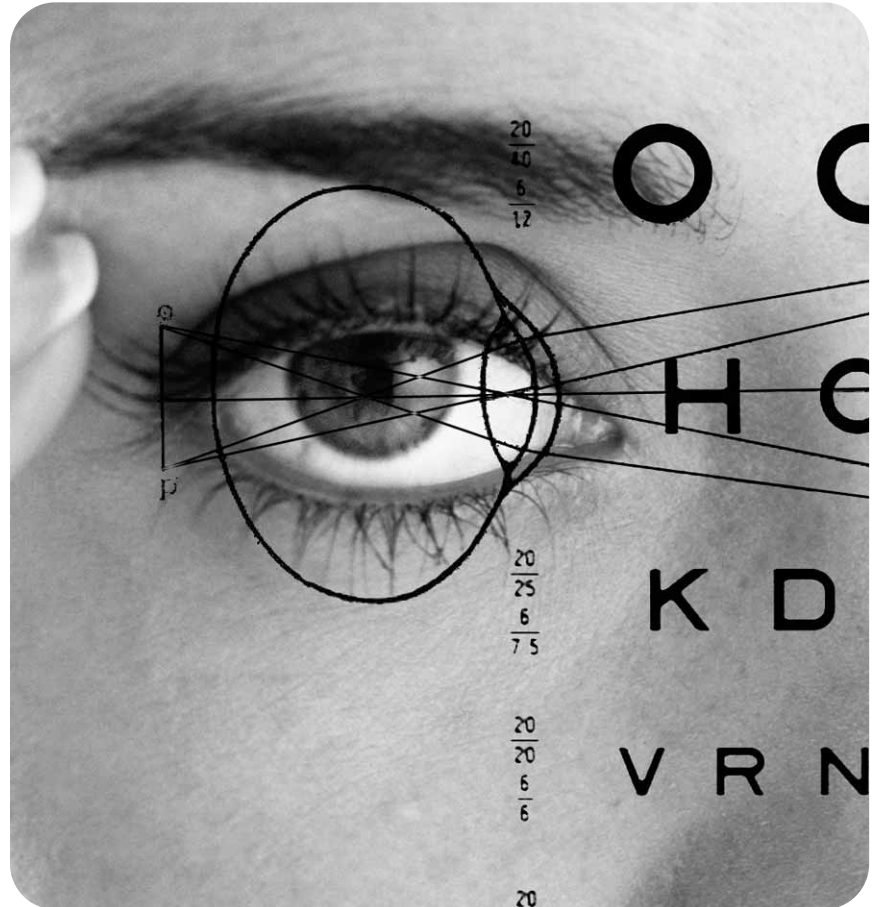
Most optometrists work in their own business, either alone or with other optometrists. They not only treat patients, but they handle the business aspects of running an office.

Optometrists have completed pre-professional undergraduate study at a college or university and four years of professional education at a college of optometry, leading to the doctor of optometry (O.D.) degree.

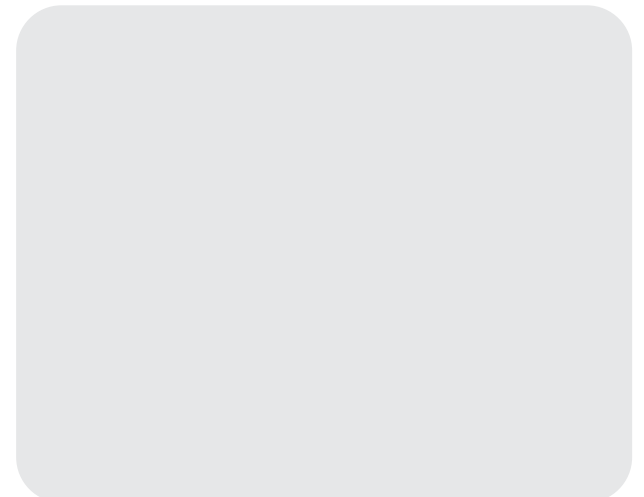
Ophthalmologists are also eye doctors who diagnose and treat eye diseases and injuries. But unlike optometrists, ophthalmologists can perform eye surgery. They may also examine eyes and prescribe eyeglasses and contact lenses. Some work in private practice while others work at clinics and hospitals.

Opticians fit and adjust eyeglasses prescribed by ophthalmologists or optometrists. In some states, they may also fit prescribed contact lenses.

Most opticians are trained on the job and, in some states, are required to have board licensure. They work for optometrists, and for themselves or others who own optician shops.



Most optometrists work in their own business, either alone or with other optometrists. They not only treat patients, but they handle the business aspects of running an office.





MEDICAL ASSISTANTS DO IT ALL (WELL, PRACTICALLY!)



Most medical assistants are employed in physicians' private offices and group practices or work side by side with ophthalmologists, podiatrists, chiropractors and other staff who deliver health care in hospitals, health spas, alternative medical treatment facilities, school offices and nursing homes.

Medical assistants keep the work flow going in all areas of a medical office, whether administrative or clinical. This allows physicians and nurses to focus on their work with patients.

Medical assistants schedule appointments, greet, prepare and seat patients, perform bookkeeping, basic accounting, insurance billing and coding duties. They also sort, pull and file medical records, and explain treatment procedures to patients. They may assist a physician during an exam and give medications as directed by the physician. They perform a variety of other clinical tests. They dress wounds, collect laboratory specimens and cultures, arrange instruments for procedures, clean and disinfect exam rooms and equipment, and order and restock supplies.

Entry-level jobs in medical assisting frequently require a medical assistant diploma. These may be earned at many community colleges or technical schools. Programs usually last one year, resulting in a certificate or diploma, or two years, resulting in an associate degree.

Medical assistants keep the work flow going in all areas of a medical office, whether administrative or clinical. This allows physicians and nurses to focus on their work with patients.

SPONSORED BY

