

## Info for High School Students interested in Medical School

### How do I become a doctor?

- To become a doctor, you must go to medical school and complete further training in one area of medicine, referred to as a “specialty.”
- The classic route to medical school (both allopathic/MD and osteopathic/DO) involves obtaining a four-year bachelor’s degree at an accredited university. A few accelerated programs exist that are accelerated. Students must apply to these in high school. The University of Missouri and Kansas City is one such example of a university that offers a combined BS-MD program that is 6 years. However, these programs are rare and competitive. You must know you want to be a physician early.
- Next, you would go to medical school for an additional four years.
- After medical school, students complete training in one specific discipline, which is referred to as residency. Examples of areas in which students complete residency include Surgery, Radiology, Internal Medicine, Dermatology, Pediatrics, and Family Medicine. Most residencies are about three years, although some can last much longer, depending on the specialization one chooses.

### What should I pick for a major when I go to college?

- You should major in a field you find interesting! There are no specific majors which are required for medical school. However, there are specific classes you must take to go to medical school. These specific classes can be found on the websites for specific medical schools but are generally the same for medical schools and involve biology, chemistry, physics, writing, and social sciences.
- It’s not recommended that you major in a specific health profession training program such as Physical Therapy or Nursing. These are professional programs that prepare you for a specific profession OTHER THAN being a doctor.

### Are there certain courses I should take in high school or college?

- The good news is that medical schools do not require specific high school coursework. Medical schools only require courses at the university level. However, you may find it helpful to take challenging courses in high school in areas related to biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, or sociology if your school offers any courses in these areas. This might help you determine whether you like the academic material used in medicine and will help you lay a foundation for college. However, this is not required.
- You should challenge yourself to take upper-level coursework in high school that will develop your analytical and critical thinking skills, as well as your communication skills.
- Each Medical School has its own set of prerequisite coursework. **Prerequisites are specific classes you must have before you can be admitted to a professional school such as medical school. OU’s prerequisites can be found at [https://www.ou.edu/tulsa/community\\_medicine/Futurestudents/admissions](https://www.ou.edu/tulsa/community_medicine/Futurestudents/admissions).**

**What can I be doing NOW to prepare myself for medical school?**

- Right now, you can focus on developing a strong work ethic and time management skills. Some students work hard in high school, but some don't need to work hard to get good grades. However, college is much more challenging. Learn to set aside a certain amount of time each day to study, even if you don't have to currently. Take notes in class and review your notes when you get home. Practice studying early – NOT waiting until the night before the test. These suggestions sound obvious, but you'd be surprised at how many first-year students in college have NOT practiced these skills. You need to get VERY good grades if you want to go to medical school, and you need good study skills to get good grades.
- Explore the healthcare profession. Volunteer in a hospital, clinic, nursing home, hospice or other health care facility, or "shadow" a doctor. You will do more of this in college, but the sooner you start, the sooner you will find out if you are REALLY interested in becoming a doctor. Explore other health professions such as nursing, physician's assistant, physical therapy, occupational therapy, etc.

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