



Doctor - GP

General practitioner doctors (GPs) work in a local surgery with residents of the local area. They identify and treat a full range of illnesses and sometimes injuries from which their patients suffer. If necessary, they refer patients to a specialist or arrange for a stay in hospital.

What does the job involve?

- discussing all kinds of health problems with patients, and perhaps their relatives
- examining the patient and either doing or arranging tests
- identifying the cause of the problem from your own knowledge and experience or else from test results
- if you can't diagnose the illness, or if the patient needs special treatment, referring the patient to a consultant
- treating the patient – checking on the computer about the right kind of medicine, calculating the correct dosage and prescribing it
- giving vaccinations to prevent illness and taking blood samples
- consulting with other medical staff, often by letter or phone, about patients and their progress
- keeping records on computers, completing forms and reports, or signing certificates.

Routes and choices while at school:

You will need to try to get at least five GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent qualifications. These should include English, maths and science. Other relevant subjects include biology, chemistry, medicine and IT.



Skills You'll need:

- knowledge of medicine
- science skills
- knowledge of psychology
- counselling skills including active listening and a non-judgemental approach
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- excellent verbal communication skills
- the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure
- patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently



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How to get into this role:

You can get into this job through:

- a university course

University

To become a GP you'll need to complete:

- a degree recognised by [the General Medical Council](#) which takes 5 years
- a foundation course of general training which takes 2 years
- general practice specialist training which takes 3 years

If you already have a degree in a science subject, you could do a postgraduate degree in medicine which takes 4 years.

If you do not have any science qualifications, you might be able to do a degree in medicine which takes 6 years and includes a pre-medical year.

Work experience

Medical schools will also expect you to have some [paid or voluntary work experience in healthcare](#).

You can get information on how to get medical work experience from the [British Medical Association](#).

You could also use [Observe GP](#) which is a free online alternative to work experience created by the Royal College of General Practitioners

Further information

Career tips

From September 2023, you might be able to do a doctor degree apprenticeship which will take around 5 years to complete.

The apprenticeship is recognised by the [General Medical Council](#).

You could then progress to the foundation course of general training before completing the specialist training in general practice.



Career path and progression

With experience you could:

- run a shared practice or specialise in an area like sports medicine, diabetes or children's health
- move into medical work in hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, the police or the prison service
- work overseas or in medicine for the [Army](#), [Royal Air Force](#) or [Royal Navy](#)
- teach students training to be GPs or go into clinical research
- become a member of a local medical committee or clinical commissioning group to get involved in [local healthcare](#)

Rates of Pay

Self-employed GPs can choose between two different systems of funding for their practices: the traditional General Medical Services contract or the Primary Medical Services which lets the GP adapt the practice to local needs. The income for a full time self-employed GP is around £80,000 to £130,000 a year.