

Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon

Tonsils, sinuses, hearing, voice and head and neck cancer. Officially otolaryngology, one of the most varied surgical specialties.

TYPICAL PAY

\$430,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$300k to \$600k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

12 to 15 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospital operating rooms, office clinics, cancer centres, children's...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Top marks in biology, chemistry, math and English. A very high average is the entry ticket.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 3 to 4 years
Any major, usually life sciences. High GPA, research, volunteering. Write the MCAT (medical school admission test).
- 3 Medical school, the MD (doctor of medicine)** 3 to 4 years
Acceptance rates are 5 to 15%. Electives in ear, nose and throat surgery plus research in your final year decide the match.
- 4 Otolaryngology residency** 5 years
Matched through CaRMS (the residency matching service). Paid, supervised. Ear surgery under a microscope, sinus surgery through a camera, cancer surgery of the neck, kids' tonsils and ear tubes.
- 5 Royal College exam, licence, often a fellowship** 1 to 2 years
Pass the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada exam, register with your provincial College of Physicians and Surgeons. Many add a 1 to 2 year fellowship.

Pros and cons

- + Huge variety: ears, nose, throat, voice, cancer, kids, cosmetic
- + A good mix of office work and surgery, with lighter call than most surgeons
- + High pay with less dependence on scarce hospital operating time
- A competitive match, about 35 spots a year
- About 13 years of training
- Airway emergencies are frightening and can kill in minutes

Optional boosts

Head and neck cancer. Ear and hearing (otology). Sinus (rhinology). Pediatric.

Good to know

The most common surgeries in kids

Ear tubes and tonsil removal are among the most common operations performed on Canadian children. An ENT (ear, nose and throat) surgeon may do several before lunch, each in under half an hour.

The smallest bones in the body

The three bones of the middle ear are smaller than a grain of rice. Ear surgeons repair and replace them under a microscope, and a cochlear implant bypasses them entirely to restore hearing.

Where these numbers come from

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
CIHI: Physicians in Canada
CaRMS: the residency match
Job Bank: Surgeons, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/ent-surgeon>



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