

Oncologist

The cancer doctor. Long training, mostly salaried jobs in cancer centres, and patients who will remember you for the rest of their lives.

TYPICAL PAY

\$400,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$300k to \$500k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

11 to 13 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Cancer centres, hospital clinics, chemotherapy units, research labs

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Top marks in biology, chemistry, math and English. You need a very high average for a science undergrad.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 3 to 4 years
Any major works. Keep a GPA (grade point average) above 3.8, volunteer, do research. 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%. Classes, then clinical rotations.
- 4 Internal medicine residency** 3 years
Matched through CaRMS (the residency matching service). Hospital wards, the ICU (intensive care unit) and clinics. In year 3 you apply to the subspecialty match.
- 5 Medical oncology residency, then certification** 2 years
Cancer clinics, chemotherapy and immunotherapy, clinical trials. Pass the Royal College exams to become FRCPC (Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada) and register with your provincial College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Pros and cons

- + Treatments are improving fast and you get to use them first
- + Salaried jobs with pensions and predictable hours
- + Deep, long relationships with patients and families
- Patients die, regularly, and you told them the news
- Emotional burnout is a real career risk
- Almost all jobs are in cities with cancer centres

Good to know

2 in 5 Canadians

About 2 in 5 people in Canada will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, and cancer is the country's leading cause of death. Survival rates keep rising, and roughly 6 in 10 people diagnosed today are exp...

The cobalt bomb was Canadian

In 1951, teams in London, Ontario and Saskatoon built the first cobalt-60 radiation machines and treated the first patients with them. It became the standard cancer radiation treatment worldwide...

Optional boosts

Medical oncologist. Radiation oncologist. Hematologist. Pediatric oncologist.

Where these numbers come from

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

CIHI: A profile of physicians in Canada, 2024 (payments)

CIHI: National Physician Database, payments by specialty, 2023 to 2024 (data tables)

CaRMS: the residency match

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/oncologist>



Scan for the full clicker