

Pediatric Surgeon

The surgeon for babies, children and teens, from newborns born with organs outside the body to appendicitis. General surgery first, then two more years. One of the smallest specialties in Canada.

TYPICAL PAY

\$400,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$280k to \$550k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

13 to 15 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Children's hospitals, neonatal intensive care units, pediatric sur...

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. Surgery and pediatrics electives earn the reference letters that decide the match.
- 4 General surgery residency** 5 years
Matched through CaRMS (the residency matching service). Adult surgery: abdomen, breast, trauma, with in-hospital call from year one. Pediatric surgery rotations happen along the way.
- 5 Pediatric surgery subspecialty** 2 years
A second match near the end of general surgery. Newborn surgery for birth defects, childhood cancer surgery, trauma, and the everyday: appendix, hernias, swallowed objects. Pass the Royal College exam to become FRCSC (Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada),...

Pros and cons

- + You fix problems a child will then live with for 80 years
- + Rare, fascinating anatomy nobody else sees
- + Academic setting with a close team
- About 14 years of training, most of it underpaid
- Tiny match, and jobs only in a few cities
- Sometimes a child dies, and you carry that home

Good to know

Kids are not small adults

A newborn's blood volume is about a cup. Drug doses, fluid, anesthesia and even the size of the stitches all change with age and weight. That is the whole reason pediatric surgery is its own specialty.

Some patients are hours old

Babies born with the intestine outside the body, or with a blocked esophagus, go to the operating room within their first day of life. Many are diagnosed on ultrasound before birth, so the surgeon is waiting w...

Optional boosts

Neonatal surgery. Pediatric surgical oncology. Trauma. Research.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Pediatric surgeon, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Canadian Association of Paediatric Surgeons
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
CIHI: A profile of physicians in Canada, 2024 (payments)

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/pediatric-surgeon>



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