

Plastic Surgeon

Rebuild what injury, cancer and birth defects take away, and reshape what patients pay to change. Far more reconstruction than Hollywood.

TYPICAL PAY

\$450,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$300k to \$700k

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, burn units, hand clinics, private cosme...

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%. Plastic surgery electives and research in your final year decide the match.
- 4 Plastic surgery residency** 5 years
 Matched through CaRMS (the residency matching service). Paid, supervised. Burns, hand, breast reconstruction, facial fractures, cleft lip and palate, skin cancer.
- 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. Most add a 1 year fellowship.

Pros and cons

- + Huge variety: babies, burns, cancer, hands, faces, cosmetic
- + The option of private practice with no call and high income
- + Visible, life-changing results for patients
- One of the most competitive matches, with only 25 to 30 spots a year
- About 13 years of training
- Hand and face trauma call at hospital jobs

Good to know

Plastic has nothing to do with plastic

The name comes from the Greek word *plastikos*, to mould or shape. The specialty existed long before the material, and it grew up rebuilding the faces of soldiers wounded in the First World War.

Most of it is not cosmetic

In Canadian hospitals the bulk of plastic surgery is reconstruction: burns, cancer defects, hand injuries, cleft palates and facial fractures, all covered by provincial health plans. Cosmetic surgery is the smalle...

Optional boosts

Hand and microsurgery. Breast reconstruction. Craniofacial and pediatric. Burns.

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/plastic-surgeon>



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