

Psychiatrist

A medical doctor who diagnoses and treats mental illness, and can prescribe. Five years of residency, and Canada is badly short of them.

TYPICAL PAY

\$300,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$200k to \$400k

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

**Hospitals, mental health centres,
private offices, virtual care**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Top marks in biology, chemistry, math and English. Psychology courses are a bonus, not a requirement.
- 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 including a psychiatry block.
- 4 Psychiatry residency** 5 years
Matched through CaRMS (the residency matching service). Inpatient wards, emergency psychiatry, child, geriatric and addiction rotations, plus supervised psychotherapy.
- 5 Certification and licence** End of residency
Pass the Royal College exam to become FRCPC (Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada), then register with your provincial College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Pros and cons

- + Demand is enormous, you will never lack patients
- + Low overhead and real schedule control
- + Video visits make it the most remote-friendly specialty
- Suicide, psychosis and trauma are part of every week
- Emergency shifts can include agitated or violent patients
- Progress is slow and some patients do not get better

Good to know

1 in 2 Canadians by age 40

CAMH (the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) says half of all Canadians have had a mental illness by the time they turn 40. CIHI (Canadian Institute for Health Information) counted about 5,900 psy...

Canada's biggest mental health hospital

CAMH (the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) in Toronto is the country's largest mental health teaching hospital and one of the biggest research centres of its kind in the world.

Optional boosts

Child and adolescent psychiatry. Forensic psychiatry. Geriatric psychiatry. Addiction medicine.

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/psychiatrist>



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