

Rheumatologist

The joint and immune system doctor. Arthritis, lupus and gout, clinic hours, and one of the shortest-staffed specialties in Canada.

TYPICAL PAY

\$310,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$230k to \$420k

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

Private offices, hospital clinics, arthritis centres, academic centres

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 Rheumatology residency, then certification** 2 years
Arthritis clinics, lupus and vasculitis, joint injections, ultrasound. The Canadian Rheumatology Association runs a national in-training exam each year. Pass the Royal College exams to become FRCPC (Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada) and register with your pr...

Pros and cons

- + Regular hours and very little overnight call
- + New biologic drugs turned crippling diseases into manageable ones
- + Severe shortage means guaranteed work anywhere in Canada
- Among the lower-paid internal medicine subspecialties
- Thirteen years of training for a clinic job
- Waitlists mean patients arrive in pain and angry about the delay

Optional boosts

Inflammatory arthritis. Lupus and vasculitis. Musculoskeletal ultrasound. Pediatric rheumatology.

Good to know

Millions of Canadians have arthritis

More than 4.2 million Canadians aged 15 and older, about 16%, reported having arthritis in the Public Health Agency of Canada's last national estimate, and the agency projects about 7 million by 2031 as...

Not just an old person's disease

There are more than 100 kinds of arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis often starts between 30 and 50, and thousands of Canadian children have juvenile arthritis. Osteoarthritis, the wear-and-tear kind, is the one m...

Where these numbers come from

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

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/rheumatologist>



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