

Sports Medicine Doctor

The team doctor. Injuries, concussions and getting athletes back on the field. Usually a family doctor with one extra year, not a surgeon.

TYPICAL PAY

\$260,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$180k to \$380k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

9 to 12 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Sports medicine clinics, team sidelines, university athletics, hos...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Top marks in biology, chemistry, math and English. Play sports; it helps more here than in any other specialty.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 3 to 4 years
Kinesiology is a natural fit, but 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 Family medicine residency** 2 years
Matched through CaRMS (the residency matching service). Clinics, hospital wards, emergency, obstetrics. Pass the family medicine certification exam.
- 5 Sport and exercise medicine year, then the diploma** 1 year
Matched through the family medicine enhanced skills match. Sports clinics, sideline coverage, concussion and fracture care. Then write the CASEM (Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine) diploma exam, the standard credential for sport medicine in Canada.

Pros and cons

- + Shortest path to a doctor's career on this site, about 9 years
- + Patients are mostly young, healthy and motivated
- + Sidelines, playoffs and sometimes the Olympics
- Lower pay than most specialists
- Team work is mostly evenings and weekends, often unpaid
- Pressure from coaches, parents and players to clear injured athletes

Good to know

The exam is a day of stations

The CASEM (Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine) diploma exam runs about 6 to 7 hours and rotates you through 18 to 20 practical stations: examining a knee, counselling a concussed play...

Not a surgeon

Sports medicine doctors do not operate. Torn ligaments that need surgery go to orthopedic surgeons. Most sports injuries never need an operation, which is why the non-surgical sports doctor exists.

Optional boosts

Ultrasound-guided injections. Concussion care. Exercise as medicine. Emergency medicine skills.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Physician, sports medicine, wages (updated Nov 2025)
CASEM (Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine): Diploma in Sport and Exercise Medicine
Royal College: Area of Focused Competence in Sport and Exercise Medicine, training requirements
College of Family Physicians of Canada

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/sports-medicine-doctor>



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