

Cardiologist

A heart doctor who diagnoses and treats heart disease, often without ever opening the chest.

TYPICAL PAY

\$496,010

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$107k to \$712k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

14 to 16 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Hospitals, heart clinics,
catheterization labs, private pract...**

How you get there

- 1 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any major, but finish the pre-medicine sciences, keep a very high grade average, and write the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test).
- 2 Medical school** 4 years
An MD (doctor of medicine) or DO (doctor of osteopathic medicine) degree, with clinical rotations in the last two years.
- 3 Internal medicine residency** 3 years
Paid hospital training in general adult medicine. This is the base every cardiologist is built on.
- 4 Cardiovascular disease fellowship** 3 years
Specialist training in heart disease: clinic, imaging, the catheterization lab and the coronary care unit.
- 5 Board certification and license** After training
Certify in internal medicine and then in cardiovascular disease through the American Board of Internal Medicine, and hold a license from your state medical board.

Pros and cons

- + One of the highest paid careers in the country
- + You treat the leading cause of death, with treatments that clearly work
- + A mix of clinic, imaging and hands-on procedures
- Fourteen years minimum before you are fully qualified
- Around \$200,000 of student debt is normal
- Nights and weekends on call for emergencies throughout your career

Optional boosts

Interventional cardiology. Electrophysiology. Heart failure and transplant. Cardiac imaging.

Good to know

Heart disease kills more Americans than anything else

It has been the leading cause of death in the United States for decades, ahead of every form of cancer. That is the whole reason this specialty is so large and so well paid.

There is a clock on a heart attack

Hospitals are measured on how fast they can open a blocked artery after a patient arrives, with a target of 90 minutes. Muscle dies every minute it stays closed, which is why the catheterization team runs.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Cardiologists (29-1212.00)
American Board of Internal Medicine
American College of Cardiology
United States Medical Licensing Examination

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/cardiologist>



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