

Dermatologist

A doctor for skin, hair and nails. Very well paid, and one of the hardest residencies to get.

TYPICAL PAY

\$328,730

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$103k to \$579k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

12 to 13 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Skin clinics, hospital dermatology departments, surgery suites, aca...

How you get there

- 1 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any major, but finish the pre-medicine sciences with a very high grade average and sit the 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 Intern year** 1 year
A general year of hospital medicine or surgery before dermatology training starts.
- 4 Dermatology residency** 3 years
Skin clinic, dermatopathology under the microscope, and surgery. Paid, and very hard to get into.
- 5 Board certification and license** After training
Certify with the American Board of Dermatology and hold a license from your state medical board.

Pros and cons

- + Among the best paid careers in the country
- + Predictable clinic hours and very little night work
- + A mix of diagnosis, minor surgery and long-term patient relationships
- Twelve years of training and around \$200,000 of debt
- One of the hardest residencies in medicine to match into
- Many appointments are three minutes long, which can feel like a conveyor belt

Optional boosts

Micrographic dermatologic surgery. Dermatopathology. Pediatric dermatology. Cosmetic and laser dermatology.

Good to know

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the country

More Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer each year than with all other cancers combined. Most of it is found by a dermatologist looking at a spot the patient had stopped noticing.

The surgery happens while you wait

In micrographic surgery, the surgeon removes a thin layer, freezes and examines it under a microscope in the next room, and goes back for more only where cancer still shows at the edge. The patient sits in th...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Dermatologists (29-1213.00)
American Board of Dermatology
American Academy of Dermatology
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/dermatologist>



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