

Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon

Ears, sinuses, voice, swallowing and head and neck cancer. One of the few surgical specialties where you also run a clinic.

TYPICAL PAY

\$414,010

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$78k to \$523k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

13 to 14 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospital operating rooms, surgery centers, clinics, children's hospitals

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, physics and math, with the grades to get into a strong college program.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any major, as long as you finish the pre-medical science courses and sit the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).
- 3 Medical school** 4 years
Two years of science, two years of hospital rotations. You graduate as a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D...)
- 4 Otolaryngology residency** 5 years
Five years covering ears, sinuses, airway, voice, head and neck cancer and facial reconstruction. Assigned by a national computer match.
- 5 Board certification** After residency
Written and oral examinations from the American Board of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery.
- 6 Optional fellowship** 1 to 2 years
One or two more years in a sub-area such as ear surgery, cancer, children or facial plastic surgery.

Pros and cons

- + Among the best paid specialties in medicine
- + Operating and clinic in the same week, so the work does not get monotonous
- + Patients of every age, from newborns to the very old
- Thirteen years and around \$200,000 of debt before you start
- One of the hardest residency matches to win a place in
- Head and neck cancer work is emotionally heavy and the operations are long

Optional boosts

Otology and neurotology. Head and neck oncology. Pediatric otolaryngology. Rhinology.

Good to know

The government will not print the salary

The federal wage survey stops publishing a figure once it reaches \$239,200 a year, so for this group it prints a footnote instead of a median. Every number you see quoted for surgeon pay above that lin...

Ear tubes are one of the most common childhood operatio...

Putting tiny drainage tubes into the eardrums of children with repeated ear infections takes a few minutes per ear and is performed constantly. Tonsil removal is in the same category. A lot of this speci...

Where these numbers come from

O*NET OnLine: Surgeons, All Other (29-1249.00)
Bureau of Labor Statistics: Surgeons, All Other, May 2023 wages
Doximity 2025 Physician Compensation Report
American Academy of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery

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/ent-surgeon>



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