

Internal Medicine Doctor

The adult body, all of it, and the complicated patients nobody else can sort out. Eleven years of training.

TYPICAL PAY

\$256,560

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$74k to \$475k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

11 to 12 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Clinics, hospital wards, group practices, teaching hospitals

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, physics and math, with grades good enough for a competitive college.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any major, but you must finish the pre-medical science courses and sit the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).
- 3 Medical school** 4 years
Two years of science, then two years of hospital rotations. You graduate as a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO).
- 4 Internal medicine residency** 3 years
Wards, clinics and intensive care, paid and supervised, with more independence each year. Matched to a program by a national computer match.
- 5 License and board certification** During and after residency
State medical license, then certification by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Pros and cons

- + Strong pay and near total job security
- + The widest medical training there is, and a door into a dozen subspecialties
- + You are the doctor who figures out what is actually going on
 - Eleven years and roughly \$200,000 of debt first
 - Charting and insurance paperwork eat hours every week
 - Clinic internists earn less than almost every specialist they refer to

Optional boosts

Cardiology. Gastroenterology. Pulmonary and critical care. Geriatrics or infectious disease.

Good to know

An internist is not an intern

An intern is a first-year doctor in any specialty. An internist is a fully trained specialist in adult medicine. The words look alike and mean completely different things, which is why many internists just say the...

Most medical specialties grew out of this one

Cardiology, oncology, endocrinology, rheumatology, nephrology and infectious disease all began as branches of internal medicine, and you still reach every one of them by finishing an internal medicine reside...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: General Internal Medicine Physicians (29-1216.00)
United States Medical Licensing Examination
American College of Physicians
Association of American Medical Colleges

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/internal-medicine-doctor>



Scan for the full clicker