

Medical Specialties Guide

Allergy And Immunology

Specialists in this field treat disorders related to how the body reacts to foreign substances. They treat such things as seasonal allergies, eczema, asthma, food and drug allergies and AIDS. To become an allergy and immunology specialist, medical school graduates must complete three years of training in an internal medicine or pediatric residency program, followed by an additional two years of training in an allergy and immunology residency program.

Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular specialists are physicians of internal medicine trained to treat disorders related to the heart, including such conditions as heart disease, congestive heart failure, arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats) and high blood pressure. To become a cardiovascular specialist, a medical school graduate must complete three years of training in an internal medicine residency program and an additional two years of training in cardiovascular disease.

Dermatology

Dermatologists address disorders of the skin, including warts, acne, eczema, skin cancers, psoriasis and sun damage. To become a dermatologist, a medical school graduate must complete four years of training in a dermatology residency program, including one year of general clinical training and three years of dermatology education.

Endocrinology, Diabetes And Metabolism

Endocrinologists are physicians trained in internal medicine to diagnose and treat illnesses and disorders of those glands as well as metabolic systems that produce hormones. They treat such conditions as diabetes, hypertension, thyroid, pituitary, calcium, and nutritional and sexual disorders. To become an endocrinologist, a medical school graduate must complete a three-year internal medicine residency program followed by two years of training in an endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism residency.

Endocrinology, Reproductive

A reproductive endocrinologist is a physician trained as an OB/GYN who has received additional training to treat infertility and other reproductive disorders. To become a reproductive endocrinologist, a physician must complete an OB/GYN residency program, followed by three years of training in reproductive endocrinology.

Family Practice

Family practice physicians care for the total health of an individual and family, from the time they are born through old age. They are trained to provide both medical and surgical care. When a problem is beyond the scope of their expertise, they will refer the patient to a specialist. To become a family practice physician, a medical school graduate must complete a three- year residency program in family practice.

Gastroenterology

Gastroenterologists are physicians trained in internal medicine to diagnose and treat disorders of, or related to, the digestive system, including the stomach, liver, gallbladder and bowels. To become a gastroenterologist, a medical school graduate must complete a three- year internal medicine residency program followed by three

years of training in a gastroenterology residency.

Geriatric Medicine

Specialists in geriatric medicine are trained in internal medicine, but focus on treatment of the elderly. They are familiar with how to engage support resources such as nursing homes and social services in patient care. To become a specialist in this area, a physician either must complete a three-year family practice or internal medicine residency, followed by 12 additional months of training specific to geriatric medicine.

Gynecology

Please see obstetrics and gynecology.

Hematology

Hematologists are physicians trained in internal medicine to deal with blood disorders and diseases and with the spleen and lymph glands including leukemia, lymphoma, sickle cell disease, hemophilia and other cancer-related blood disorders. Hematologists must complete a three-year residency program in internal medicine followed by two years of training in hematology.

Infectious Disease

Infectious disease specialists are internal medicine doctors trained to treat communicable diseases, including AIDS. To become an infectious disease specialist, a physician must complete a three-year residency in internal medicine followed by two years of training in an infectious disease residency.

Internal Medicine

Internists generally treat adolescents and adults. They are trained to understand all major organ systems and treat illness ranging from colds and flu to diabetes and AIDS. When a problem is beyond the scope of their expertise, they will refer the patient to a specialist. To become an internal medicine specialist, a medical school graduate must complete three years of training in an internal medicine residency program.

Nephrology

A nephrologist is a physician trained in internal medicine to treat disorders and diseases of the kidneys and urinary system. A nephrologist must complete a three-year residency program in internal medicine followed by two years of training in nephrology.

Neurology

A neurologist treats disorders of the brain and nervous system. To become a neurologist, a medical school graduate must complete four years of training in a neurology residency program.

Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN)

OB/GYN physicians treat diseases of the female reproductive system (gynecology) and care for women and fetus during pregnancy (obstetrics). To become an OB/GYN, a medical school graduate must complete four years of training in an OB/GYN residency program.

Occupational Medicine

Occupational medicine physicians are preventive medicine specialists trained in treating job-related diseases, recognizing and resolving workplace hazards,

instituting rehabilitation methods, and providing well-managed care. To become an occupational medicine physician, a doctor must complete medical school, one year of training in a general clinical area such as family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics or surgery, two years in an occupational medicine residency program and one year of practice in the field of occupational medicine.

Oncology, Gynecologic

A gynecologic oncologist is a physician trained as an OB/GYN who has received additional specialty training to treat gynecologic cancer. To become a gynecologic oncologist, a physician must complete four years of training in an OB/GYN residency program, followed by three years of training in a gynecologic oncology residency.

Oncology, Medical

Medical oncologists are physicians trained in internal medicine to treat disorders related to tumors and cancers throughout the body. To become a medical oncologist, a medical school graduate must complete a three-year residency program in internal medicine, followed by two years of training in a medical oncology residency.

Oncology, Radiation

Radiation oncologists use radiation to treat patients with cancer and other diseases. To become a radiation oncologist, a medical school graduate must complete one year of training in a general clinical residency program such as internal medicine, family practice, obstetrics/gynecology, surgery or pediatrics and four years of training in a radiation oncology residency program.

Ophthalmology

Ophthalmologists diagnose and treat eye disorders such as vision loss, conjunctivitis, cataracts and glaucoma. To become an ophthalmologist, a medical school graduate must complete one year of general clinical training in an internal medicine, neurology, pediatrics, surgery, family practice or emergency medicine residency followed by three years of training in an ophthalmology residency program.

Otolaryngology

Otolaryngologists (ENTs) are head and neck surgeons that treat such disorders as hearing loss, sinusitis, tonsillitis and cancers of the head and neck. To become an otolaryngologist, a medical school graduate must complete one year of training in a general surgery residency program and four years of training in an otolaryngology-head and neck surgery residency.

Pediatrics

Pediatricians provide care for infants, children and adolescents, including preventive care and care of the entire range of illnesses affecting young people. To become a pediatrician, a medical school graduate must complete three years of training in a pediatric residency program.

Pediatric Specialists

Pediatric specialists include cardiologists, gastroenterologists, rheumatologists and other specialists trained to treat children. To become a pediatric specialist in most specialty areas, a medical school graduate must complete a three-year residency in pediatrics, followed by two years of residency training in the subspecialty areas. Exceptions are pediatric cardiology and pediatric rheumatology, which require three years of subspecialty residency training, and pediatric sports medicine, which requires only one year.

Physical Medicine And Rehabilitation

Physiatrists diagnose and treat impairments or disabilities related to musculoskeletal, neurologic, cardiovascular and other systems to restore function and relieve pain. To become a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist, a medical school graduate must complete one year of training in a general clinical area such as family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics or surgery, and three years of training in a physical medicine and rehabilitation residency program.

Plastic Surgery

Plastic surgery deals with the repair, reconstruction, or replacement of physical defects of form or function involving the skin, musculoskeletal system, cranio-maxillofacial structures, hand, extremities, breast and trunk, and external genitalia. Plastic surgeons may perform cosmetic or reconstructive procedures. There are two educational paths that a medical school graduate may take to become a plastic surgeon. The first is to complete three years of training in a general surgery residency program or complete a neurological surgery, orthopedic surgery, otolaryngology or urology residency or complete an American Dental Association-approved residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery. After completing one of these courses of study, a surgeon would finish an additional two to three years of training in a plastic surgery residency program. Alternatively, a medical school graduate can complete a five to six-year plastic surgery residency program in which approximately four to five years concentrates on general clinical surgical training and two years on plastic surgery.

Psychiatry

Psychiatrists diagnose and treat disorders that are mental, emotional or behavioral. To become a psychiatrist, a medical school graduate must complete four years of training in a psychiatry residency program.

Pulmonary Disease

Pulmonologists are physicians trained in internal medicine to treat disorders that affect the lungs and other chest tissues such as pneumonia, bronchitis, cancer, emphysema and asthma. A pulmonologist must complete a three-year residency program in internal medicine and an additional two years of training in pulmonary disease.

Rheumatology

A specialist in the non-surgical treatment of rheumatic illnesses, especially arthritis. Rheumatologists have special interests in unexplained rash, fever, arthritis, anemia, weakness, weight loss, fatigue, joint or muscle pain, autoimmune disease and anorexia. They often serve as consultants, acting like detectives for other doctors. Rheumatologists have particular skills in the evaluation of the over 100 forms of arthritis.

Sports Medicine

A sports medicine physician is trained in internal medicine, family practice medicine or pediatrics to treat disorders and diseases related to sports performance and injury. A physician in this specialty must either complete a three-year internal medicine, family practice or pediatrics residency followed by one year of training in sports medicine.

Surgery, Colon And Rectal

Colon and rectal surgeons treat patients of all ages who are affected by disease of the intestinal tract, anus and rectum. They perform surgeries and diagnostic

techniques and treat such disorders as hemorrhoids, polyps, diverticulitis and cancer. To become a colon and rectal surgeon, a medical school graduate must complete a general surgery residency program of at least five years, followed by an additional year of training in a colorectal residency program.

Surgery, General

General surgeons operate on patients suffering from both minor and serious health problems. To become a surgeon, a medical school graduate must complete a five-year residency program in surgery.

Surgery, Hand

Physicians trained as orthopedic surgeons, plastic surgeons or general surgeons may undertake additional training to become hand surgeons, specializing in restoring movement and function to the hands. To become a hand surgeon, a medical school graduate must complete an orthopedic surgery, general surgery or plastic surgery residency program, followed by one year of training in hand surgery.

Surgery, Neurological

Neurosurgeons diagnose, evaluate and treat disorders of the brain and nervous system, such as aneurysms, head and spinal cord trauma, and brain and spinal cord cancers. To become a neurosurgeon, medical school graduates must complete one year of training in a general surgery residency program and five years of training in a neurological surgery residency program.

Surgery, Orthopedic

Orthopedic surgeons diagnose and treat disorders that impair movement, such as arthritis, fractures, lower back pain, joint degeneration and shoulder, hip and knee injuries. To become an orthopedic surgeon, medical school graduates must complete one year of training in a general medical specialty residency, such as general surgery, internal medicine or pediatrics, followed by four years of training in an orthopedic surgery residency.

Surgery, Thoracic

Thoracic surgeons perform surgical procedures of the heart, lungs and esophagus to treat conditions such as lung cancer, coronary artery disease, aneurysms and heart disease. To become a thoracic surgeon, a medical school graduate must complete five years of training in a general surgery residency, followed by two years of training in a thoracic surgery residency.

Surgery, Vascular

A vascular surgeon diagnoses and treats diseases of the circulatory system that are not specific to the heart or brain. To become a vascular surgeon, a medical student must complete five years of training in a general surgery residency followed by a year of training in vascular surgery or complete a cardiothoracic surgery residency that has been approved as a training program for vascular surgery (it will involve more than two years of training).

Urology

Urologists medically and surgically treat disorders of the female urinary tract and the male urogenital tract such as prostate conditions, urinary tract infections and bladder conditions. To become a urologist, a medical school graduate must complete five years of residency training that include at least one year of training in general surgery, three years of training in clinical urology and six months of training in urology or other clinical disciplines related to urology.

