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Naturopathic Doctor

Overview

A naturopathic doctor (ND) practices a form of medicine that blends centuries-old, natural, non-toxic therapies with current advances in the study of health and human systems. Naturopathic medicine covers all aspects of family health from prenatal to geriatric care, with a special focus on whole-patient wellness.

NDs tailor their treatment protocols to suit each patient as an individual, placing a strong emphasis upon prevention and self-care. Naturopathic medicine is based upon six fundamental principles:

The Healing Power of Nature - Trust in the body's inherent wisdom to heal itself.

Identify and Treat the Causes - Look beyond the symptoms to the underlying cause.

First Do No Harm - Utilize the most natural, least invasive and least toxic therapies.

Doctor as Teacher - Educate patients in the steps to achieving and maintaining health.

Treat the Whole Person - View the body as an integrated whole in all its physical and spiritual dimensions.

Prevention - Focus on overall health, wellness and disease prevention

Graduates from [accredited naturopathic medical schools \(http://www.aanmc.org/col_univ/index.php\)](http://www.aanmc.org/col_univ/index.php) are eligible to practice in any state in which they meet the licensing or state requirements. In some states, ND graduates are required to pass rigorous professional board exams in order to be licensed as primary care general practice physicians. Only graduates from [CNME-accredited \(http://www.cnme.org/links.html\)](http://www.cnme.org/links.html) naturopathic medical schools are eligible to sit for the professional board exams in licensed states and provinces.

Naturopathic physicians collaborate with all other branches of medical science, referring patients to conventional healthcare practitioners for diagnosis or treatment when appropriate.

The prospects for making a prosperous living in this field are excellent for the foreseeable future. Naturopathic medicine continues to gain acceptance and recognition throughout the U.S. and in Canada.

Working Conditions

Some NDs establish and operate their own private practices, while others choose to work for an integrative medical clinic. Some NDs become research scientists, natural pharmacists, public health administrators, consultants to industry or insurance companies, or advisors to other health care professionals. The work environments and professional options are as wide-ranging for NDs as they are for any [MD \(http://www.explorehealthcareers.com/en/Career.17.aspx\)](http://www.explorehealthcareers.com/en/Career.17.aspx) or [DO \(http://www.explorehealthcareers.com/en/Career.18.aspx\)](http://www.explorehealthcareers.com/en/Career.18.aspx).

Academic Requirements

Licensed naturopathic physicians have attended [four-year, professional-level programs at accredited institutions \(http://www.aanmc.org/col_univ/index.php\)](http://www.aanmc.org/col_univ/index.php), where they have been [educated in the same basic sciences \(http://www.aanmc.org/adm_lic/curriculum.php\)](http://www.aanmc.org/adm_lic/curriculum.php) as allopathic and osteopathic physicians.

For admission into most naturopathic medicine programs, students must have a bachelor of science degree, including three years of pre-medical studies. The ND curriculum is comparable to that of any major allopathic or osteopathic medical school. In fact, some naturopathic medical schools require more hours of basic and clinical science than do top allopathic or osteopathic medical schools.

[Pre-requisites \(http://www.aanmc.org/adm_lic/prerequisites.php\)](http://www.aanmc.org/adm_lic/prerequisites.php) include college-level courses in physics, biology, and general and organic chemistry. Coursework in mathematics and psychology courses also may be required. In addition, an applicant's standing is strengthened if s/he has taken courses in anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, botany, and/or developmental psychology.

Naturopathic medical schools look for **applicants** (http://www.aanmc.org/adm_lic/requirements.php) who are intelligent, curious and capable of high-level critical thinking, yet also intuitive, flexible and imaginative. In addition, applicants must have certain internal qualities, such as empathy, integrity, perseverance, and a strong belief in the efficacy of natural medicine.

For more information on **accredited programs in naturopathic medicine** (http://www.aanmc.org/adm_lic/accreditation.php), see the **Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Schools** (<http://www.aanmc.org/index.php>) website.

Professional Associations

American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (<http://www.naturopathic.org/>)

Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (<http://www.cnme.org/>)

Funding Opportunities

Search for funding opportunities in this field (<http://www.explorehealthcareers.org>)

Enrichment Programs

Search for enrichment programs in this field (<http://www.explorehealthcareers.org>)

Source

www.naturopathic.org

Learn more about this field:

Complementary & Alternative Medicine (<http://www.explorehealthcareers.com/en/Field.18.aspx>)

Average Salary: \$80,000

Years in school: 8 *

Job outlook: Excellent

* after high school graduation

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