

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The latest volume in our *Careers in* series, *Careers in Healthcare*, Second Edition, provides a thorough introduction to the wide range of career opportunities available to those interested in the many areas of this critical field, from being an audiologist to a surgical assistant, and everything in between. This new edition of *Healthcare*, which was originally published in 2014, greatly expands on the first, adding 20 new profiles and completely reworking and updating the rest, in order to bring the content up-to-date with the latest advancements and career statistics.

The types of careers related to healthcare are seemingly infinite, from the obvious, like surgeon, to the not-so-obvious, like phlebotomist. *Careers in Healthcare*, Second Edition, offers insight into what it's like to work directly with patients, as well as working in adjacent positions that provide the vital support services needed by doctors and nurses in order to diagnose and treat those in need. If you are interested in how to turn your passion for health, technology, and detail-oriented work into a fulfilling career, this book is for you.

At the heart of this volume, like the dozens of previous *Careers in* titles, are 39 occupation profiles that cover various careers involving healthcare in some way, from audiologists to nuclear medicine technologists and surgical assistants & technologists. Each career profile offers details about its specific career:

Snapshots offer current data on:

- Median pay
- Job outlook
- Educational and other requirements
- Working conditions
- Recommended areas of interest

Career Overviews describe:

- Duties
- Work environment
- Work schedules

In addition, each profile provides important qualities for the job, specific and general job requirements, anticipated rates of growth, and why. Also included is a list of related occupations, both in the public and private sectors, and a list of resources for more information, with profession-specific associations and certifying bodies.

Merging scholarship with occupational development, this single comprehensive guide-book provides students who are interested in exploring a career in healthcare with the necessary insight into the wide array of options available in this vital and ever-evolving field. The book offers guidance regarding what job-seekers can expect in terms of training, advancement, earnings, job prospects, working conditions, relevant associations, and more. *Careers in Healthcare*, Second Edition, is specifically designed for a high school and undergraduate audience and is edited to align with secondary or high school curriculum standards.

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare industry is dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and management of disease and the preservation of health through services provided by trained medical and allied healthcare professionals. These professionals usually have specific educational degrees, as well as certifications and licensure, qualifying them to provide care. Healthcare providers include medical doctors (MDs), dentists, nurses, dietitians, physical therapists, chiropractors, emergency medical technicians, home health aides, pharmacists, and many more. These and other such occupations make up the subject of the present book. One must realize, however, that the industry is very broad and not every occupation could be included here. Our goal with this new edition is not to be all-encompassing, but rather to expand on the first—released a decade ago—with updated information across the board and coverage of professions that were not previously included, such as audiologist, exercise physiologist, genetic counselor, medical dosimetrist, occupational therapist, and more.

In the twenty-first century, many new advances have been made in diagnosis, treatment of illness, and disease management—advances that continue to develop exponentially, thanks to the advent of breakthroughs such as artificial intelligence (AI) and nanotechnology, and a better understanding of genomics. The healthcare industry continues to offer a wide range of services and products to prevent, treat, and manage disease, as well as to promote wellness. Emphasis on healthy lifestyle choices has heightened, as have early diagnosis and treatment of preventable diseases. Americans have been encouraged to take an active part in their health, and portions of the industry are transitioning from thinking of themselves as providing illness care to instead providing health and wellness. Living healthful lifestyles remains the most cost-effective solution to the many complications and adverse outcomes of sickness and disease; more than half of all U.S. healthcare dollars are spent to treat and manage illnesses that can be prevented or reduced through lifestyle change.

Medical and healthcare services today are provided by a diverse group of providers in various settings. In the past, the majority of services were delivered within healthcare institutions such as hospitals. Today, many procedures and treatments once limited to inpatient settings have moved to outpatient settings and to patients' homes. Telehealth has also exploded in popularity since the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing patients and doctors to connect remotely, saving valuable time in the process and allowing for greater ease of providing care.

Ambulatory healthcare services help patients remain in their residences within their communities, decreasing costs and improving patient satisfaction. Many medical procedures can safely be performed in physician or dentist offices. Physical therapists, occupational therapists, and others offer their services in outpatient centers, rehabilitation centers, and patients' homes. Innovative medical equipment allows patients to remain outside the walls of institutional care facilities such as hospitals.

Traditional medicine still remains primary in patient care management; physicians and nurses provide the majority of care. Consultants in nutrition and fitness also provide services to support lifestyle changes for disease prevention and wellness, and various forms of therapy—physical or occupational, for example—are enjoying heightened

Audiologist

Snapshot

Career Cluster(s): Health Science; Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Interests: Hearing; Health; Helping Others

Earnings (Yearly Average): \$87,740

Employment & Outlook: Much Faster Than Average Growth Expected

OVERVIEW

Sphere of Work

Audiologists diagnose, manage, and treat patients who have hearing, balance, or related problems.

Work Environment

Audiologists may find work in different environments, including the offices of physical, occupational and speech therapists, and audiologists; offices of physicians; state, local, and private hospitals; or for various educational services.

Some audiologists, such as those contracted by a school system, travel between multiple facilities. Audiologists may work closely with other healthcare specialists, including audiology assistants (a type of medical assistant), physicians and surgeons, registered nurses, and speech-language pathologists.



Photo via iStock/peakSTOCK. [Used under license.]

Most audiologists work full time. Some work weekends and evenings to meet patients' needs.

Occupation Interest

Work as an audiologist requires a strong interest in science and medicine, as well as excellent communication and problem-solving skills. Audiologists must also be patient, compassionate, and detail-oriented, as they work closely with their patients to improve their quality of life. This person is dedicated to helping others and is passionate about using their expertise to improve the lives of those with auditory impairments.

A Day in the Life—Duties and Responsibilities

Audiologists diagnose conditions such as hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ear). They use a variety of devices to identify the extent and underlying cause of hearing loss. For example, with audiometers they measure the volume and frequency at which a person hears.

Treatment depends on the type and severity of a patient's hearing loss and may

Duties and Responsibilities

- Examining patients who have conditions related to the outer, middle, or inner ear
- Assessing the results of the examination and diagnose problems
- Creating treatment plans to meet patients' goals
- Providing care for routine procedures, such as testing
- Fitting and dispensing hearing aids and other assistive listening devices
- Counseling patients and their families on ways to listen and communicate, such as by lip reading or through technology
- Evaluating patients regularly to monitor their condition and modify treatment plans, as needed
- Recording patient progress
- Researching the causes and treatment of hearing and balance disorders
- Educating patients on ways to prevent hearing loss

Profile

Working Conditions: Inside

Education Needs: Bachelor's Degree; Doctoral Degree

Licensure/Certification: Required

Opportunities for Experience: Internship; Supervised Clinical Practice

Interest Score: ISC

range from cleaning wax out of ear canals to fitting and checking hearing aids. (Audiologists' ability to diagnose as well as treat patients distinguishes their work from that of hearing aid specialists.) Audiologists work with physicians and surgeons treating patients whose hearing may be improved with cochlear implants, small devices that are surgically embedded near the ear to deliver electrical impulses to the auditory nerve.

Audiologists also counsel patients and their families on adapting to hearing loss, such as through use of technology, and may refer them to resources and other support.

In addition to their work related to hearing conditions, audiologists help patients who

Famous First

Chiropractic care dates back to ancient civilizations, with evidence of spinal manipulation found in Chinese and Greek medical texts as far back as 2700-1500 BCE.

Source: nardonechiropracticcenter.com

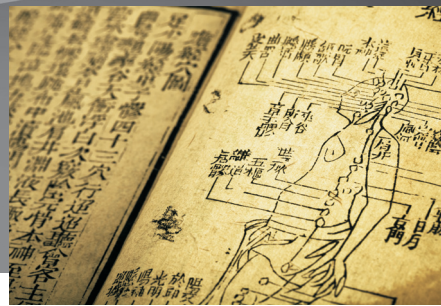


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- Dentist
- Exercise Physiologist
- Massage Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Optometrist
- Physical Therapist
- Physician/Surgeon
- Podiatrist

MORE INFORMATION

American Chiropractic Association (ACA)

Member Information Center
1701 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22209
703.276.8800
memberinfo@acatoday.org
www.acatoday.com

The Clinical Compass

P.O. Box 2054
Lexington, SC 29071
803.356.6809
ccgpp@sc.rr.com
clinicalcompass.org

Dietitian/Nutritionist

Snapshot

Career Cluster(s): Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Health Services; Human Services

Interests: Food; Health & Wellness; Science

Earnings (Yearly Average): \$69,680

Employment & Outlook: Faster Than Average Growth Expected

OVERVIEW

Sphere of Work

Dietitians and nutritionists evaluate the health of their clients through nutrition assessment and diagnostic laboratory testing. Based on their findings, dietitians and nutritionists advise clients on behavior modifications and intervention plans, including which foods to eat—and which to avoid—to improve their health.

Dietitians and nutritionists help prevent, or support treatment of, health conditions such as heart disease, autoimmune disease, and obesity. Many dietitians and nutritionists provide personalized information for individuals. For example, a dietitian or nutritionist might teach a client with diabetes how to plan meals to improve and balance the person's blood sugar. Other dietitians and nutritionists work with groups of people who have similar needs. For example, a dietitian or nutritionist might plan a diet with healthy fat and limited sugar to help clients who are at risk for heart disease. Dietitians and nutritionists may work as part of a team with other healthcare staff to coordinate client care.



Photo via iStock/aldomurillo. [Used under license.]

Medical Assistant

Snapshot

Career Cluster(s): Health Science

Interests: Medicine; Helping Others

Earnings (Yearly Average): \$42,000

Employment & Outlook: Much Faster Than Average Growth Expected

OVERVIEW

Sphere of Work

Medical assistants complete administrative and clinical tasks, such as scheduling appointments and taking patients' vital signs. Their duties vary by location, specialty, and employer.

Work Environment

Medical assistants typically work in a variety of healthcare settings, such as physician offices, hospitals, and outpatient care centers, as well as in the offices of other health practitioners. They may also work in a combination of these environments, depending on their employer.

Some medical assistants spend a lot of time standing or walking as they visit patients. Others sit at a computer for much of the day to work on administrative tasks.

Occupation Interest

Medical assistants will be those interested in working in the healthcare field

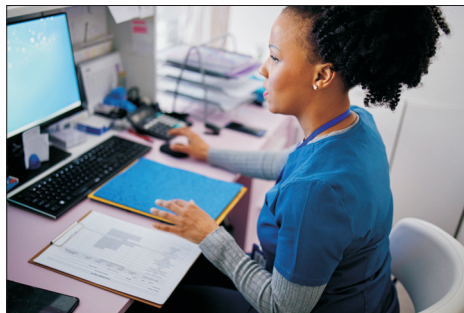


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and assisting in providing direct patient care. They should have strong interpersonal and organizational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to multi-task in a fast-paced environment. This person should also have a caring and compassionate personality and be willing to work with a diverse group of patients and healthcare professionals.

A Day in the Life—Duties and Responsibilities

Medical assistants often focus on either clinical or administrative tasks, although some do both. Their primary clinical tasks involve taking and recording patients' personal information and medical history. Other tasks that assistants are allowed to do vary by state and may include performing basic laboratory tests, disposing of contaminated supplies, and sterilizing medical instruments. Some assistants have additional responsibilities, such as instructing patients about medications or drawing blood.

Medical assistants may have a range of administrative tasks. They help patients understand and receive their insurance coverage, such as by completing forms, coding information, and contacting companies about billing. They also inventory, order, and restock medical and office supplies; answer telephones; and schedule appointments.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Interviewing patients and recording their medical history
- Measuring patients' vital signs, such as their blood pressure and weight
- Helping physicians with patient examinations
- Giving patients injections or medications as directed by physicians and as permitted by state law
- Scheduling patient appointments
- Collecting and preparing samples of blood and other specimens for laboratory tests
- Entering patient information, such as their vital signs and test results, into medical records
- Maintaining inventory of medical and office supplies

Profile

Working Conditions: Inside

Physical Strength: Medium Work; Varies

Education Needs: High School Diploma or Equivalent; Postsecondary Certificate

Licensure/Certification: Varies by State

Opportunities for Experience: Apprenticeship; On-the-Job Training

Interest Score: CSR

Some medical assistants specialize according to the type of medical practice in which they work. For example, medical assistants who help ophthalmologists and optometrists show patients how to insert, remove, and care for contact lenses.

Medical assistants must adhere to confidentiality standards when working with patients and patient information.

Medical assistants should not be confused with other healthcare occupations that may have similar titles or duties. For example, both medical assistants and physician as-

“Try This” Activity: Shadowing an Occupational Therapist or Therapy Assistant

1. **Reach Out to Local Facilities:** Contact hospitals, rehabilitation centers, schools, outpatient clinics, or skilled nursing facilities in your area. Ask if they offer shadowing opportunities for students interested in occupational therapy. Some occupational therapists or therapy assistants may also work in home health or community settings, which can provide different perspectives.
2. **Experience Different Specialties:** Occupational therapy is a diverse field that includes specialties such as pediatrics, geriatrics, mental health, hand therapy, and neurorehabilitation. Shadowing therapists in different specialties will help you understand the scope of occupational therapy practice and identify areas you might be most interested in.
3. **Observe Interactions with Patients:** Pay attention to how occupational therapists assess, plan, and implement therapy, as well as how they interact with patients and their families. Notice the importance of communication skills, empathy, and adaptability in this profession.
4. **Ask Questions:** Prepare thoughtful questions in advance. Ask the occupational therapist and therapy assistant about the day-to-day responsibilities, the challenges they face, and what they find most rewarding about their job. Inquire about the skills and qualities that make someone successful in the field of occupational therapy.
5. **Reflect on Your Experience:** After each shadowing session, take some time to reflect on what you learned. Consider how the experience aligns with your interests, skills, and values. Reflecting on what you enjoyed or didn't enjoy can help you determine if occupational therapy is the right career for you.
6. **Volunteer or Take Part in Related Activities:** If shadowing opportunities are limited, consider volunteering in settings where occupational therapists and assistants work, such as hospitals, schools, or community centers. Working with individuals with disabilities or special needs can also provide valuable experience and insight into the field.
7. **Network with Professionals:** Connect with the occupational therapists and assistants you shadow and ask if they are aware of other opportunities, such as internships, volunteer work, or workshops. Building relationships with professionals in the field can open doors and provide further learning opportunities.

Additional Suggestions:

Join Student Organizations: Many universities have pre-occupational therapy or rehabilitation science clubs where you can connect with peers, attend workshops, and learn more about the field.

Take Relevant Coursework: Enroll in introductory courses on anatomy/physiology, psychology, or kinesiology to gain foundational knowledge.

Read OT Journals or Blogs: Keep up to date with the latest research, trends, and stories from practicing occupational therapists and therapy assistants.

—Kathy Weibl

OCCUPATION SPECIALTIES

Addiction Nurse

Addiction nurses care for patients who need help to overcome addictions to alcohol, drugs, and other substances.

Cardiovascular Nurse

Cardiovascular nurses care for patients who have heart disease or heart conditions and people who have had heart surgery.

Critical Care Nurse

Critical care nurses work in intensive-care units in hospitals, providing care to patients with serious, complex, and acute illnesses and injuries that need close monitoring and treatment.

Forensic Nurse

Forensic nurses care for victims of violent crime, including sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, elder mistreatment, and death. They may also work in corrections facilities and help in the aftermath of mass disasters. When a crime has been committed, they collect evidence and may also testify in court.

Genetics Nurse

Genetics nurses provide screening, counseling, and treatment for patients with genetic disorders, such as cystic fibrosis.

Neonatal Nurse

Neonatal nurses take care of newborn babies who have health issues.

Nephrology Nurse

Nephrology nurses care for patients who have kidney-related health issues stemming from diabetes, high blood pressure, substance abuse, or other causes.

Public Health Nurse

Public health nurses promote public health by educating people on warning signs and symptoms of disease or managing chronic health conditions. They may also run health screenings, immunization clinics, blood drives, or other community outreach programs.

Rehabilitation Nurse

Rehabilitation nurses care for patients who have temporary or permanent disabilities or have chronic illnesses.

Famous First

The father of modern surgery is considered to be Ambroise Paré, a French barber-surgeon who revolutionized surgical techniques in the 16th century. Source: facts.org

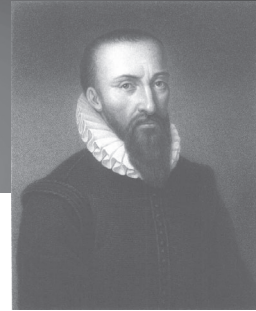


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Related Occupations

- Clinical Laboratory Technologist/Technician
- Dental Assistant
- Licensed Practical/Licensed Vocational Nurse
- Medical Assistant
- Physician/Surgeon
- Registered Nurse

MORE INFORMATION

American Board of Surgical Assistants (ABSA)

P.O. Box 362
Hazelhurst, WI 54531
877.617.8345
office@absa.org
www.absa.org

Association of Surgical Technologists (AST)

6 West Dry Creek Circle, Suite 200
Littleton CO, 80120
800.637.7433
memserv@ast.org
www.ast.org

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)

9355—113th Street North, #7709
Seminole, FL 33775
727.210.2350
mail@caahep.org
www.caahep.org

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD)

211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60611-2637
312.337.2196
www.aapd.org

American Academy of Periodontology (AAP)

737 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60611-6660
313.787.5518
www.perio.org

American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC)

2233 S Presidents Drive Suite F
Salt Lake City, UT 84120
800.626.2633
www.aapc.com

American Art Therapy Association (AATA)

4875 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite 240
Alexandria, VA 22304
888.290.0878
arttherapy.org

American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC)

P.O. Box 630007
Irving, TX 75063-9998
972.243.2272
info@aarc.org
www.aarc.org

American Association of Bioanalysts (AAB)

906 Olive Street, Suite 1200
Saint Louis, MO 63101
314.241.1445
www.aab.org

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)

655 K Street NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001
202.463.6930
www.aacnnursing.org

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM)

7700 Old Georgetown Road, Suite 250
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.968.4100
webmaster@aacom.org
www.aacom.org

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP)

1400 Crystal Drive, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22202
703.739.2330
mail@aacp.org
www.aacp.org

American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM)

15850 Crabbs Branch Way, Suite 320
Rockville, MD 20855
301.948.9760
podinfo@aacpm.org
www.aacpm.org

American Association of Endodontists (AAE)

180 North Stetson Avenue, Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60601
800.872.3636
info@aae.org
www.aae.org

American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA)

20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 3720
Chicago, IL 60606
312.899.1500
www.aama-ntl.org

American Association of Medical Dosimetrists (AAMD)

2201 Cooperative Way, Suite 600
Herndon, VA 20171
703.677.8071
aamd@medicaldosimetry.org
www.medicaldosimetry.org

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)

10275 W. Higgins Road, Suite 500
Rosemont, IL 60018
847-692-7050
www.aana.com

American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)

P.O. Box 12846
Austin, TX 78711
512.442.4262
www.aanp.org