

[From the American Osteopathic Association website: www.osteopathic.org](http://www.osteopathic.org)

Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine use a unique whole-person approach to help prevent illness and injury.

Accounting for approximately 11% of all physicians in the United States, Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DOs, bring a unique, patient-centered approach to every specialty across the full spectrum of medicine. They are trained to listen and partner with their patients to help them get healthy and stay well.

DOs practice in all medical specialties, including primary care, pediatrics, OBGYN, emergency medicine, psychiatry and surgery. Moreover, DOs hold some of the most prominent positions in medicine today, including overseeing care for the President of the United States, the NASA medical team, Olympic athletes and many who serve in the uniformed services.

From their first days of medical school, DOs are trained to look beyond your symptoms to understand how lifestyle and environmental factors impact your well-being. They practice medicine according to the latest science and technology, but also consider options to complement pharmaceuticals and surgery.

As part of their education, DOs receive special training in the musculoskeletal system, your body's interconnected system of nerves, muscles and bones. By combining this knowledge with the latest advances in medical technology, they offer patients the most comprehensive care available today.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is osteopathic medicine?

The osteopathic philosophy of medicine sees an interrelated unity in all systems of the body, with each working with the other to heal in times of illness.

Osteopathic medicine is practiced by Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DOs, who bring a whole-person approach to care by focusing on looking beyond your symptoms to understand how lifestyle and environmental factors impact your wellbeing.

The profession is one of the fastest growing segments in health care today, with one out of every four medical students enrolled in an osteopathic medical school.

How are DOs educated and trained?

Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DOs, complete four years of osteopathic medical school, with an emphasis on preventive medicine and comprehensive patient care.

They are trained to recognize the interrelated unity among all systems of the body, each working with the other to promote overall health and wellness.

Upon graduating from medical school, DOs complete internships, residencies and fellowships. This training lasts three to eight years and prepares them to become licensed and board-certified.

How are DOs licensed and certified?

Like all physicians in the U.S., Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DOs, are licensed to practice medicine by licensing boards in each state. Requirements vary by state.

Typically, licensure requires successful completion of a medical licensing exam administered by the state licensing board or acceptance of a certificate issued by the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners upon completion of a rigorous series of exams.

The Federation of State Medical Boards provides a directory of state licensing boards that can be contacted for information regarding physician licensure.

DOs earn board certification when they achieve expertise in a medical specialty or subspecialty by meeting the requirements of a specialty certifying board.

Physicians in the U.S. can become board certified through the American Osteopathic Association or the American Board of Medical Specialties. The board certification process involves a combination of written, practical and simulator-based tests.