

Information for High School Students

Is there anything I can do to prepare academically?

Right now, the best thing you can do is work on building a good foundation of math and science coursework and, if available, take advanced classes. You may be able to receive Advanced Placement (AP) credit that could allow you to place out of basic requirements and move you into upper-level coursework once you begin college. Also, use this time to work on developing solid study habits, test-taking skills, and written and verbal communication skills.

What extracurricular opportunities should I look for?

Look for opportunities to volunteer in a medical setting, shadowing a doctor, working in a lab, or in medical research. The best opportunities are ones you can sustain over time and in which you can build relationships, such as volunteering at a hospital for a semester or longer, instead of only volunteering for a one-time event. These activities will confirm your premedical interest when you apply to college, when you apply for related opportunities during college, and when you ultimately apply to medical school. Such experiences also will enable you to meet potential mentors who can motivate you and help you develop your skills. Jane Cary, director of science and technology advising at Williams College, says, "You may always ask your family physician or pediatrician if you can observe him or her. Younger students are frequently drawn to medicine as a career by positive interaction with their own physicians."

How do I find out about these experiences?

A good place to start is with your guidance counselor or science teacher. They may know of programs or opportunities for high school students. Be wary of any program that requires you to pay a high fee to participate.

It's a good idea to speak to other participants or volunteers to learn about the organization, the work, and how they felt about their experience. You also can see if there are any service organizations, hospitals, or clinics in your area that need help. Even if you don't have direct access to patients, just being in a medical environment still will be worthwhile.

Are there any summer programs or internships available to high school students?

For a listing of summer enrichment programs, go to the Aspiring Docs database and search using the "high school" filter under "education level" at <https://services.aamc.org/summerprograms>.

What should I think about when applying to colleges?

Most U.S. colleges will offer the required and recommended prerequisites asked for by medical schools. You also may wish to tour the lab facilities and science department classrooms. Consider whether your potential colleges have pre-health advisors, pre-health clubs, a relationship with a local hospital, or other helpful resources on campus or in the community that will help you sustain your motivation and meet your goals.

If you're already sure you want to be a doctor, you may consider B.S./M.D. programs (read more on our B.S./M.D. fact sheets), which combine undergraduate school with medical school, giving you both your bachelor and medical degrees. These programs last six to nine years, and requirements vary from program to program. You can learn more about specific programs by viewing their profiles on the [Medical School Admission Requirements](http://www.aamc.org/msar) website: www.aamc.org/msar.

MORE INFORMATION

The Basics:

www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/basics

Get Experience:

www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/experience