

What is a DO?

If you're like most people, you've been going to physicians ever since you were born, but you're unaware that some or all of them could have been osteopathic physicians, also known as DOs. You may not even be aware that there are two types of complete physicians in the United States—DOs and MDs.

The fact is that both DOs and MDs are **fully qualified physicians** licensed to prescribe medication and perform surgery.



DOs and MDs are Alike in Many Ways

- Students entering both DO and MD medical colleges typically have already completed **four-year bachelor's degrees** with an emphasis on scientific courses.
- Both DOs and MDs complete **four years of basic medical education**.
- After medical school, both DOs and MDs obtain graduate medical education through **internships, residencies and fellowships**. This training lasts **three to eight years** and prepares DOs and MDs to practice a specialty.
- Both DOs and MDs can **choose to practice in any specialty** of medicine—such as pediatrics, family medicine, psychiatry, surgery or ophthalmology.
- DOs and MDs must pass comparable **examinations** to obtain state licenses.
- DOs and MDs both practice in accredited and licensed **health care facilities**.
- Together, DOs and MDs **enhance the state of health care** available in the U.S.

While DOs and MDs have many things in common, osteopathic medicine is a parallel branch of American medicine with a distinct philosophy and approach to patient care. DOs can bring an extra dimension to your health care through their unique skills.

The Osteopathic Approach

For more than a century, osteopathic physicians have built a tradition of bringing health care to where it is needed most:

- Approximately 60% of practicing osteopathic physicians practice in the **primary care specialties of family medicine, general internal medicine, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology**.
- Many DOs fill a critical need for physicians by practicing in **rural and other medically underserved communities**.

In addition, these modern-day pioneers practice on the cutting edge of medicine. **DOs combine today's medical technology with their ears to listen caringly to their patients, with their eyes to see their patients as whole persons, and with their hands to diagnose and treat patients for injury and illness.**

Share This

