Medical Careers

When it comes to medical careers, many people know exactly what they want. For some, interacting with patients could be the best part. For others, research is what makes their eyes light up and for every medical professional who loves a quiet night shift, there’s another one who thrives in a fast-paced trauma department.

Quickest Medical Careers to Start:

Some medical careers, such as physicians, require a serious time investment in education with years of studying after high school. Other careers in healthcare require much less time to earn the education required to start helping patients. These careers - the ones that take anywhere from a few weeks to a couple years to begin - are excellent for those at the start of their professional lives, as well as those considering a career change after years of working elsewhere. Jobs you can enter into within months include nursing assistants or home health aides. Jobs that take two years of college to enter into include pharmacy technicians, EMT’s, X-Ray technicians and dental assistants just to name a few.

What Kind of Patients Do You Want to Work With?

When deciding on a medical profession you must consider what patients you would enjoy working with most. If you like children for example you may consider these medical fields:

1. Pediatrician:
A pediatrician is a medical doctor that specializes in young patients, from birth up to the age of 18 or 21. These professionals have expertise in diseases and conditions that relate specifically to children.
2. **School nurse:**
Many schools have to have a medical professional on staff when school is in session. School nurses provide first-line medical care to students who get sick at school. They also administer medications to students in school if necessary.

3. **Respiratory therapist:**
Respiratory therapists provide care to patients who have difficulty with their breathing. This includes older patients who might develop lung issues over time, such as emphysema. They also see many patients with underdeveloped lungs, such as prematurely born infants and children struggling with asthma.

**Working with Seniors:**

Since the body tends to break down as we get older, it makes sense that one of the biggest consumers of healthcare services is usually the senior population. Most in the medical field will work with geriatric patients at some point. Jobs in the medical field that work with older patients include:

1. **Geriatrician:**
A geriatrician is a medical doctor who specializes in older adult patients, handling everything from routine preventative care and tests to acute problems and hospitalizations. These doctors specialize in issues related to the aging process, including memory issues, chronic pain, osteoporosis and cancer.

2. **Optician:**
Opticians work with optometrists and ophthalmologists by adjusting and fitting glasses and contact lenses of patients. Most opticians work in private offices, so they will see a wide range of patients, including young children. As people age it is normal for the need for corrective lenses to increase.

3. **Nursing assistant:**
Nursing assistants provide basic medical and personal care to patients. Much of the work they perform each day are tasks that elderly individuals need help with, such as eating, bathing and getting dressed. Nursing assistants often will work in nursing homes or hospitals. They can also provide in home care if needed.
Working with Mothers

Many current or expecting mothers need specialized medical care to have the healthiest pregnancy and childbirth possible. There are numerous medical careers devoted primarily with working with current or future mothers.

1. **Diagnostic medical sonographer:**
These professionals are sometimes referred to as ultrasound technicians because they use machines that utilize ultrasound waves to create a visual image of organs and other structures within the body. A medical sonographer monitors the unborn babies and looks for abnormalities that may exist.

2. **Obstetrician:**
Obstetricians are medical doctors that specialize in childbirth and pregnancy. These doctors specialize in helping mothers have a healthy pregnancy so they can take home a happy, healthy newborn when the time comes.

**Necessary Skills for Everyone in the Medical Field Include the following:**

1. **Empathy and Support Skills**
The ability to effectively support others during stressful situations.

2. **Reading Comprehension**
The ability to understand reading materials and apply what was read to situations.

3. **Writing Skills**
The ability to write clearly, including translating complicated information into general terms.

4. **Oral Communication Skills**
The ability to communicate clearly and accurately with others through face-to-face, telephone, written or other formats.

5. **Organizational Skills**
The ability to remain focused during times of stress or distraction.

6. **Problem Solving Skills**
The ability to review a situation or issues and devise an appropriate solution.

7. **Clinical Skills**
Specialized knowledge and skills in the medical field, such as taking a blood sample or performing an X-ray.

8. **First-Aid Skills**
Knowledge of first-aid treatment and life-support care to injured individuals.
Complete the following questions based on what you have read regarding careers in the health care field.

1. Medical jobs that require you to work with children include ________________, ________________, and ________________.

2. What is one specific job that a school nurse may need to do?

3. A geriatrician specializes in ________________.

4. Your grandmother is struggling to read the newspaper. She says she cannot see the words clearly. She should probably go see:
   A. an obstetrician.
   B. an optometrist
   C. a pediatrician
   D. a school nurse

5. Another name for a diagnostic medical sonographer is:
   A. pharmacy technician
   B. geriatrician
   C. obstetrician
   D. ultrasound technician

6. What are three basic skills that someone in the health field must have to do their job effectively?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

7. Someone hired as a nursing assistant may be required to ________________
   ________________________________________________________________

8. If you started to develop breathing problems you may need to see a ________
   ________________________________________________________________

9. Do you have an interest in becoming a health care professional as an adult? If so, what type of health care are you interested in? If not, what job would you like to pursue upon your high school graduation? (Share on a separate sheet of paper.)