

Family Physicians

Family physicians demonstrate competence in the patient-centred clinical method as well as an understanding of a patient's experience with illness and the impact the illness has on the patient's life. They use their understanding of human development and knowledge of family and social systems to develop a comprehensive care plan for the management of disease and illness for the patient and their families. Family physicians are skilled at providing their patient with information unique to their individual condition as well as information that allows them to manage their own health care and make decisions in their best interest. Family physicians are skilled in dealing with uncertainty; they treat and counsel patients with chronic diseases, emotional problems, acute disorders and they may provide palliative care to patients with terminal illnesses. Family physicians have a responsibility to advocate public policy promoting patients' health and through the patient-physician relationship they become an advocate as well as a resource for the patient.

Family physicians are the patients' primary contact with the health care system and provide continuous care towards the management of patients' health. They are community based but work in a diversified practice manner; including office based practice, health care institutions, and long term care facilities. A family physician may also contribute significantly to research and the educational training of students for family practice.

In general, students studying medicine in Canada initially complete a bachelor's degree, however not all medical schools require a bachelor's degree as an entrance requirement. Upon completion of a bachelor's degree, students may need to write the Medical College Admissions Test, MCAT, for admittance into medical school.

To become a family physician, students are required to graduate from an approved medical school with two years of residency training in family medicine, and complete the qualifying examinations of the Medical Council of Canada. Family medicine residents also have to complete the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) exams. Licensure by the provincial or territorial licensing authority is also required and in Quebec, membership in the professional corporation for physicians is mandatory.

For more information, visit the websites listed below:

Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association - www.nlma.nf.ca

Canadian Medical Association www.cma.ca

College of Family Physicians of Canada - www.cfpc.ca

National Occupation Classification 2006 - <http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2006/Welcome.aspx>