

## What does a doctor do?

Doctors, also known as **general practitioners**, care for, diagnose and treat the health problems of individuals and whānau in the community. They look after people's health and wellbeing in many different specialty areas. Doctors may: consult with and examine patients, treat people over extended periods, advise on health care and prevention of illness, perform minor surgery, prescribe and administer medicines, keep medical records, refer patients, and train doctors working towards their exams.

## Salary

Trainee and graduate general practitioners usually earn \$80,000 to \$130,000 per year. General practitioners usually earn \$95,000 to \$250,000 per year.

## What subjects do I need to take at school?

- ❖ Biology
- ❖ Chemistry
- ❖ Maths
- ❖ Physics
- ❖ English

## How do I get into it?

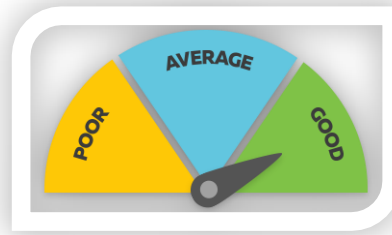
To become a general practitioner you need to:

- ✓ complete the Health Sciences First Year programme at Otago University, **or** the first year of either the Bachelor of Health Sciences **or** Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science at Auckland University
- ✓ complete a five-year Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree at Otago or Auckland universities
- ✓ work for two years as a house officer (supervised junior doctor) in a hospital
- ✓ complete another three years of specialist training and examinations to become a Fellow of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners.
- ✓ be registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand.

## ***Interpersonal skills***

Doctors should also be:

- ❖ Patient & empathetic
- ❖ able to work well under pressure and remain calm in emergencies
- ❖ able to make good decisions and solve problems
- ❖ good at time management
- ❖ able to keep information confidential
- ❖ understanding of other cultures' attitudes to medical treatment.



## Will I get a job after training?

Chances of getting a job as a general practitioner are good, as there are a number of factors leading to a shortage of doctors. General practitioner appears on Immigration New Zealand's long term skill shortage list, which means the Government is actively encouraging skilled general practitioners from overseas to work in New Zealand. There also exists extra payment for graduates who work in hard-to-staff locations, such as rural and remote areas. Most doctors are employed by a medical practice on a full or part-time basis, or as a locum (a general practitioner who fills in when others are away), or are self-employed in their own practice. They may also be employed by a district health board. General practitioners can further develop their skills in areas such as emergency medicine, sports medicine, childbirth, geriatric medicine, paediatrics, and palliative care.

## Where can I find out more?

- **New Zealand Medical Association**  
(04) 472 4741 <https://www.nzma.org.nz/>