Naturopathic Doctor (N.D.)

What does a Naturopathic Physician do?
- Naturopathic physicians are primary care providers who treat the whole person.
- The naturopathic scope of practice includes laboratory and clinical diagnosis, botanical medicine, nutrition, homeopathy and other traditional healing methods.
- Every year more than 80 million Americans turn to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Naturopathic combines many of these healing techniques in one field.
- NDs tailor their treatment protocols to suit each patient and place a strong emphasis on preventive care and self-care.
- Naturopathic physicians collaborate with other branches of medicine and refer patients to conventional healthcare practitioners as needed.
- The emphasis in naturopathic medicine is on disease prevention and optimizing wellness.
- Although new to many Americans, naturopathic medicine began in the late 19th century and came into its own in the United States in the early 1900s.

How do I become an N.D.?
- To practice as an N.D., you must attend an accredited naturopathic medical school (Council on Naturopathic Medical Education [CNME]-accredited).
- These 4 year programs require all the same basic sciences as are required at traditional medical schools, but students also study holistic and nontoxic approaches to therapy.
- Students generally must complete 4 years of training in clinical nutrition, acupuncture, homeopathic medicine, botanical medicine, psychology, and counseling.
- Graduates of these institutions are eligible to practice in any state in which they meet the licensing requirements. Not all states, however, allow naturopathic physicians to be fully licensed but the field is rapidly gaining recognition and acceptance.
- Even in states where naturopathic is not fully recognized, you can still practice but will be limited to the treatments allowed by the state.
- Undergraduate prerequisite courses resemble those for traditional medical schools.
- After completing a bachelor’s degree, students who have been accepted into a naturopathic program then complete 4 years of professional school.
- NDs must also pass a board exam (the NPLEX) to be eligible for licensure at the end of their training.

What prerequisite courses do I need?
- Prerequisite courses vary only slightly between programs.
- Naturopathic schools typically require the courses listed below.
- Also highly recommended are anatomy and physiology, biochemistry, botany, developmental psychology, biomedical ethics, philosophy of science, and public speaking. All required courses must have a minimum grade of a C. Additional information on each college’s requirements can be found on their websites.

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<th>Prerequisite Course Equivalencies (specific courses may vary depending on major)</th>
<th>Purdue Equivalent</th>
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| 1 year\(^{6}\) of Biology with labs (this is the minimum—should take more) | BIOL 11000-11100 OR BIOL 13100 & 23100/23200  
Anatomy & Physiology Recommended: BIOL 20300-20400 or 30100-30200 |
| 1 year of General Chemistry with labs | CHM 11500-11600 OR CHM 12500-12600 OR CHM 12300-12400 |
| 1 year of Organic Chemistry with labs | CHM 25500/25501-25600/25601 OR CHM 26100/26300-26200/26400 |
| At least one semester of Physics | PHYS 22000-22100 OR PHYS 17200 & 27200 |
| 1 year of English | ENGL 10600 OR ENGL 10800 Plus upper level writing or literature course |
| 1 semester of Psychology | PSY 12000 required (more recommended including a lifespan course) |
| 1 semester of college-level algebra | MATH 15200, 15300, or 15900; or higher level math |
| At least 2 courses in humanities and social sciences—Intro to Sociology will be required for the MCAT in 2015 | |

\(^{6}\)one year typically equals 8 semester hours for science classes including 2 hours of lab (6 hours for non-science courses)
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Purdue University Center for Pre-Professional Advising

What is the job outlook?
- As so many Americans make use of complementary and alternative therapies, naturopathic is a growing field.
- More states are licensing professionals.
- Average salary is about $80,000 but ranges from $60,000 to $200,000.

What else do I need to do before I apply?
- Generally naturopathic schools will expect to see that you have spent time observing (shadowing) a naturopath or holistic healer.
- You should have a record of service to others.
- Research, while not required, is viewed favorably.
- Health care experience, both hands on and observational, is important.
- Naturopathic schools seek applicants who are curious, capable, flexible, and imaginative who also have empathy and integrity. As several of the healing methods used by naturopaths are based in traditional healing methods, a healthy respect for the variety of cultures in the world is also needed.
- Prospective students should also have a strong belief in the efficacy of natural medicine.

How do I apply?
- A common application is available for some of the programs. The system is called NDCAS.
- For schools not yet participating in NDCAS, application is made directly to those programs.

Where can I get more information?
American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP)
http://www.naturopathic.org

Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME)
http://www.cnme.org

National Center for Complementary & Alternative Medicine
http://www.nccam.nih.gov

NDCAS
https://portal.ndcas.org/

Programs
Bastyr University (Kenmore, Washington)
http://www.bastyr.edu/academic/profiles

National University of Health Sciences (Lombard, Illinois)http://www.nuhs.edu

For more information about naturopathic programs or your interests in the health professions, contact the Center for Pre-Professional Advising at 765-496-2690 or preprofessional@purdue.edu.

Information for this career guide came from Explore Health Careers, http://www.explorehealthcareers.org, the above websites, and those of individual schools.