Naturopathic Medicine (ND)

Career Description

- 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 global healing methods.
- NDs tailor their treatment protocols to suit each patient and place a strong emphasis on preventive care, nutrition, and self-care.
- Naturopathic Physicians collaborate with other branches of medicine and refer patients to conventional healthcare practitioners as needed.
- 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.

Becoming an N.D.

- To practice as an ND, you must attend an accredited naturopathic medical school (Council on Naturopathic Medical Education [CNME]-accredited).
- Students 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.
- NDs must also pass a board exam (the NPLEX) to be eligible for licensure at the end of their training.

Preparation

- Generally naturopathic schools will expect to see you have spent time observing (shadowing) a naturopath or holistic healer.
- 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 needed. Prospective students should also have a strong belief in the efficacy of natural medicine.
- 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 C. Additional information on each college’s requirements can be found on their websites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Prerequisite Courses (pre-reqs determined by each program but similar to this list)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology with labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology (recommended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Chemistry with labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry with labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics (at least 1 semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (at least 1 semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology (1 semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and Social Sciences (at least 2 courses), other recommended courses: medical terminology, biomedical ethics, public speaking, microbiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Med Planning Seminar (optional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Organizations: Caduceus Club, American Medical Student Association

Research Programs

Accredited Naturopathic Programs https://aanmc.org/naturopathic-schools/
Academic Prerequisites https://aanmc.org/naturopathic-schools/academic-prerequisites/

Applying

- An online common application, called NDCAS, is available for some of the programs. https://ndcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login
- For schools not yet participating in NDCAS, application is directly through those programs.
- Competitive applicants will have:
  - Respect for traditional healing methods and a belief in their efficacy
  - Strong academic performance
  - Research experience is seen favorably
  - Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills
  - Volunteer and shadowing/observation experiences
  - Strong positive letters of recommendation
- Early application is essential as programs are typically small.

Fee Assistance

- Visit specific school websites to learn if fee assistance is available.

Employment Outlook

- As so many Americans make use of complementary and alternative therapies, naturopathy is a growing field.
- More states are licensing professionals https://aanmc.org/resources/licensure/.
- Average salary is about $85,000 but ranges from $60,000 to $200,000.

Programs

- *Bastyr University* San Diego, CA or Kenmore, WA
  http://bastyr.edu/academics/naturopathic-medicine
- *National University of Health Sciences* Lombard, IL
  http://www.nuhs.edu/admissions/naturopathic-medicine/
- *Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences* Tempe, AZ https://www.scnm.edu/
- *University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine* Bridgeport, CT
  http://www.bridgeport.edu/academics/graduate/naturopathic-medicine-nd/

More Information

- American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) https://www.naturopathic.org/
- Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) https://cnme.org/
- NDCAS (application service) https://ndcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login

Other Careers to Consider

- Chiropractic Medicine
- Physician (MD or DO)
- Dietician

Information for this career guide came from Explore Health Careers https://explorehealthcareers.org/?s=naturopathic+medicine, the above websites, and those of individual schools.