Naturopathic Medicine (N.D.)

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 healing methods.
- Every year more than 80 million Americans turn to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Naturopathy 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.

Becoming an N.D.

- To practice as an ND, 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 naturopathic medical school.
- NDs must also pass a board exam (the NPLEX) to be eligible for licensure at the end of their training.

Prerequisite Courses

- Naturopathic schools typically require courses similar to those 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 C. Additional information on each college’s requirements can be found on their websites.

| Common Prerequisite Courses (pre-reqs determined by each program but similar to this list) |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Requirements | Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major) |
| Biology with labs | BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 & 23100 & 23200 (lab) |
| Anatomy & Physiology (recommended) | BIOL 20300-20400 or BIOL 30100-30200 |
| General Chemistry with labs | CHM 11500-11600 or 12500-12600 or 12300-12400 or 12901 |
| Organic Chemistry with labs | CHM 25500-25600 or 26100-26200 or 26505-26605 or MCMP 20400-20500 |
| Biochemistry | CHM 33300 or 33900 or 53300 or BCHM 30700 or 56100 or MCMP 20800 |
| Physics (at least 1 semester) | PHYS 22000-22100 or 23300-23400 or 17200-27200 or 17200 & 24100 |
| English (at least 1 semester) | ENGL 10600 or ENGL 10800 plus upper level writing or literature course |
| Psychology (1 semester) | PSY 12000 required (more recommended, including a lifespan course) |
| Humanities and Social Sciences (at least 2 courses), other recommended courses: medical terminology, biomedical ethics, public speaking, microbiology |

Pre-Med Planning Seminar (optional) | BIOL 39600: Pre-Med Planning Seminar-covering how to apply
Job 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/](https://aanmc.org/resources/licensure/).
- Average salary is about $85,000 but ranges from $60,000 to $200,000.

Preparation

- Generally naturopathic schools will expect to see 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.

Applying

- A common application is available for some of the programs. The system is called NDCAS. [https://ndcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login](https://ndcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login)
- For schools not yet participating in NDCAS, application is made directly to those programs.

Fee Assistance

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

More Information

- [American Association of Naturopathic Physicians](http://www.naturopathic.org) (AANP)
- [Council on Naturopathic Medical Education](http://www.cnme.org) (CNME)
- [National Center for Complementary & Alternative Medicine](https://nccih.nih.gov/)
- [NDCAS](https://ndcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login)

Programs

- [Bastyr University](http://bastyr.edu/academics/naturopathic-medicine) San Diego, CA or Kenmore, WA
- [National University of Health Sciences](http://www.nuhs.edu/admissions/naturopathic-medicine/) Lombard, IL
- [National University of Natural Medicine](http://nunm.edu/academics/school-of-naturopathic-medicine/) Portland, OR
- [Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences](https://www.scnm.edu/academics/doctor-of-naturopathic-medicine/) Tempe, AZ
- [University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine](http://www.bridgeport.edu/academics/graduate/naturopathic-medicine-nd/) Bridgeport, CT

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