

Ophthalmology

Eye Physicians & Surgeons



Ophthalmology is a branch of medicine specializing in the anatomy, function and diseases of the eye.

An Ophthalmologist is an eye physician and surgeon (MD or DO). Ophthalmologists are specially trained to provide the full spectrum of eye care, from prescribing glasses and contact lenses to complex and delicate eye surgery. Many ophthalmologists also are involved in scientific research into the causes and cures for eye diseases and vision problems.

Education and Training (after college graduation)

- 4 years of medical school
- 1 year of medical/surgical internship
- 3 years of ophthalmology residency (hospital-based training)
- The training of an ophthalmologist is intense – as is the competition to be accepted into a residency program. For example, last year the University of Illinois at Chicago received 600 applications and granted only 84 interviews for its 6 residency slots.
- During residency, full-time teaching faculty outnumber the residents 3-1.

Patient Contact During Training

- Ophthalmology residents are exposed to more than 15,000 patients before they begin treating patients independently.
- Residents will be in direct patient contact in excess of 6,000 hours in the course of their 3-years of training. (This is in addition to the substantial clinical experience received in medical school and internship.)
- Residents will assist or be the primary doctor in hundreds of surgical cases throughout their ophthalmology training.

Board Certification

- Most ophthalmologists are board certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, the first specialty board to be established in the United States. A board-certified ophthalmologist has passed a rigorous two-part examination designed to assess his/her medical/surgical knowledge, experience and skills. Board recertification is required every 10 years.

Subspecialties

Many ophthalmologists spend 1-3 *additional* years in fellowship training in a number of specific areas of eye care, including

- Cornea and external disease
- Glaucoma
- Neuro-ophthalmology
- Ophthalmic Pathology
- Ophthalmic Plastic Surgery
- Pediatric Ophthalmology
- Retinal Diseases

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