



*choose*  
**More**  
Choose family medicine  

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*aaafp.org/choosefamilymed*

# When it's time to decide which specialty you'll practice, *what will you choose?*

Family physicians are many things:

The backbone of the U.S. health system, the quarterback of the health care team, and a patient's most trusted advocate.

Many medical specialties are limited to a region of the body, disease, age, or sex. But family physicians treat the whole person, across the lifespan.

- Family medicine has consistently been the most-recruited medical specialty by hospitals and health systems since 2006.
- Family physicians provide care for the greatest number of patients in the U.S.
- There's a great need for more family medicine doctors—A shortage of 52,000 primary care physicians is projected for the U.S. by 2025.

## Is family medicine right for me?

Want to do it all? Family medicine is a great choice. As a family physician, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Take direct care of your patients in a variety of settings
- Make a difference in how U.S. health care is delivered
- Solve a new puzzle every day
- Work in a team setting
- Take on new challenges



# Choose Purpose

Family physicians care for patients regardless of age or health condition and work to sustain an enduring, trusting relationship. They also:

- Meet the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations
- Are a patient's first contact for health concerns
- Help patients prevent, understand, and manage illness
- Navigate the health system with patients, which includes coordinating with subspecialists and staying connected with patients before, during, and after hospital stays
- Use data to coordinate services that benefit a patient's health
- Use technology to maintain and enhance access, continuity, and relationships
- Understand the effects of population-level factors and social determinants of health on patients' well-being
- Care for patients in the context of their families and the environment in which they live
- Advocate for a health care system that promotes access, preventive care, and value for patients

# Choose Variety

Family physicians offer diverse services:

**82%** routinely perform procedures

**48%** treat patients in a hospital setting

**31%** deliver emergency care

**74%** care for infants and children

**83%** have hospital privileges

**18%** provide routine OB care

# Choose Skill

Family physicians perform many types of procedures, including:

- Colposcopy/LEEP
- Colonoscopy
- Endoscopy
- Musculoskeletal injections
- Spirometry
- Skin procedures
- Suturing lacerations
- Ultrasound imaging
- Vasectomy

# Choose Versatility

Family physicians have many practice options:

Family medicine makes it possible to have a fulfilling career while maintaining a healthy work/life balance that allows time to raise a family, travel, and pursue hobbies. On average, family physicians practice 47 weeks a year and spend at least 30 hours a week directly with patients.

About 77% of family physicians practice in urban areas, and about 22% are in rural areas. You can choose to practice in a variety of settings:

- Solo or group practices
- Multispecialty group practices
- Public health, government, residency, or medical school faculty
- Research or academic health centers
- Hospitals
- Global health and international medicine
- Rural, urban, and suburban practices
- Emergency care
- Nursing homes
- Community health centers

# Choose Knowledge

Family physicians are trained to offer the best possible patient care:

There are more than 580 family medicine residency programs in the U.S. Most are three-year programs (with a few options for four-year programs). They are located all over the country, from big cities to rural areas, in traditional academic settings, communities, and the military.

All family physicians are trained in labor and delivery; emergency medicine; surgery and procedures; hospital medicine including intensive care, inpatient, and outpatient medicine; pediatrics; and geriatrics. You can also opt for elective rotations to explore areas of particular interest. Additional training options (fellowships and Certifications of Added Qualification) include:

- Adolescent medicine
- Emergency medicine
- Faculty development
- Geriatric medicine
- Hospice and palliative medicine
- Hospitalist
- Integrative medicine
- International
- Obstetrics
- Sleep medicine
- Sports medicine



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