



## Quick Facts: Naturopathic Medicine (N.D.)

<p><b>Is this career right for you?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have an inquisitive nature?</li> <li>• Do you possess an aptitude for the sciences and a history of academic success?</li> <li>• Are you drawn to a clinical career that will focus on optimizing the health and wellness of your patients, with an approach that looks beyond symptoms to treat the root cause?</li> <li>• Will you be committed to listening to and educating your patients in the steps to achieving and maintaining optimal health?</li> <li>• Do you measure your success in terms of impact rather than status?</li> <li>• Do you feel deep respect for social issues and our natural environment?</li> <li>• Is your background rich in volunteerism?</li> <li>• Is it important to you to have a career that is consistent with your ideals?</li> <li>• Are you prepared to challenge the current healthcare paradigm?</li> </ul>
<p><b>What do naturopathic physicians do?</b></p>	<p>Naturopathic physicians are primary health care providers who are experts in the intersection of conventional practice and natural therapies. N.D.s emphasize prevention, wellness and optimal health and encourage individuals' inherent self-healing process. The practice of naturopathic medicine includes modern and traditional, scientific and empirical methods, combining the wisdom of nature with the rigors of modern science.</p> <p>The six core principles of naturopathic medicine are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The healing power of nature (<i>vis medicatrix naturae</i>)</li> <li>• First do no harm (<i>primum non nocere</i>)</li> <li>• Identify and treat the cause(s) (<i>tolle causam</i>)</li> <li>• Doctor as teacher (<i>docere</i>)</li> <li>• Treat the whole person (<i>tolle totum</i>)</li> <li>• Prevention (<i>preventare</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Naturopathic physicians in clinical practice see fewer patients per day than their M.D. or D.O. counterparts and spend anywhere from one to two hours with new patients. This allows for a deep doctor-patient relationship and the ability to focus on lifestyle issues, patient education, and the root cause of illness. The majority of naturopathic physicians go into clinical practice, but N.D.s also can become educators, public health administrators, research scientists, and consultants for businesses, insurance companies, and public service organizations.</p>
<p><b>Explanation of Professional Training</b></p>	<p>Admission to an N.D. school requires a bachelor's degree. N.D. programs last an additional four years. During their first two years of study, N.D. students focus on biomedical and clinical sciences, including biochemistry, human anatomy, human physiology, histology, microbiology, immunology, human pathology, neuroscience, and pharmacology. During the final two years of their four-year program, N.D. students intern in clinical settings under the close supervision of licensed professionals. While earning their degree, N.D. students learn all modalities of proven natural therapies, including clinical nutrition, botanical medicine, lifestyle counseling, mind-body medicine, massage, physical medicine, hydrotherapy, and homeopathy.</p> <p>After completing your N.D. degree, you will have the option of completing a residency program for additional specialized training.</p>
<p><b>Average Age of Entering Students</b></p>	<p>The average age of entering students in N.D. programs is close to 30 years old. Many N.D. students are career changers who discovered naturopathic medicine as an adult, though students range in age from 21 to 60+ years.</p>

<p><b>Pre-N.D. Clinical Experience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shadowing</b> is defined as the observation of a health care provider while that person cares for patients. It is important to shadow at least one N.D. and to shadow or conduct informational interviews with at least two more N.D.s.</li> <li>• <b>Direct patient interaction</b> is defined as being in a position to offer comfort and moral support to conscious patients in a health care environment. Most successful applicants have spent <i>at least six months volunteering for 4 hours/week</i> (often more) in a direct patient interaction role. Your objectives are to become comfortable around sick and injured patients, to gain greater understanding of the health care system, and to develop your communication skills in a clinical setting. Although most pre-naturopathic students gain their direct patient interaction experience by volunteering in a hospital or other clinical setting, you can also find paid work as a medical assistant, CNA, EMT, or phlebotomist. Most such positions require training in advance; your pre-health advisor can refer you to reputable training programs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Desired Traits and Experiences</b></p>	<p>Refer to the <b>List of Core Competencies for Pre-Health Students</b>, taking note that naturopathic medical schools especially emphasize the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Passion for Natural Medicine:</b> Not all patients are familiar with natural medicine. As an N.D., your passion for the field will help you educate the public about evidence-based natural medicine and to advocate for the profession.</li> <li>• <b>Service Orientation:</b> Naturopathic physicians typically have strong altruistic motivations. Most successful applicants have consistently engaged in paid and volunteer positions involving non-clinical service to others since high school. Examples include retail/restaurant jobs, working as a tutor, and volunteering in roles that allows you to directly help others who are in need. Greater consideration is given to long-term efforts that exemplify the applicant's dedication and depth of commitment to the service chosen.</li> <li>• <b>Cultural Sensitivity:</b> Every naturopathic physician cares for patients from a wide variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Thus, a history of experiences with people of diverse backgrounds is valued. Such experiences may include living abroad for a period of time, involvement with multicultural organizations, or other volunteer or paid positions that have allowed you to understand and appreciate people whose backgrounds and belief systems are quite different from your own.</li> <li>• <b>Effective Teamwork and Leadership:</b> Naturopathic physicians must serve as both leaders and collaborators, so N.D. programs seek candidates who work well with others as a team of equals but also assume leadership roles as needed. Thus, a past history of collaborating successfully with others on a team in a professional setting (such as in research, business, etc.) is valued, as is formal leadership training and experience. Examples of formal leadership roles include serving as a teaching assistant, a resident assistant in a dormitory, a wilderness guide, a manager at work, the captain of an athletic team, or an officer in the military.</li> </ul>

<b>GPA</b>	Successful applicants are expected to have a GPA of 3.0 or higher for priority admission. The average grade point average of students admitted to most N.D. schools falls between 3.1 and 3.4, depending on the school.		
<b>Admissions Test</b>	No standardized test is required for admission.		
<b>List of N.D. Schools</b>	<p>There are six accredited naturopathic medical schools in North America, with seven campuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bastyr University (BU); Kenmore, WA and San Diego, CA</li> <li>• Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine (BINM); Vancouver, British Columbia</li> <li>• Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM); Toronto, Ontario*</li> <li>• National University of Natural Medicine (NUNM); Portland, OR</li> <li>• National University of Health Sciences (NUHS); Chicago, IL</li> <li>• Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine &amp; Health Sciences (SCNM); Phoenix, AZ*</li> </ul> <p>*Schools marked with an asterisk above participate in the Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine Common Application Service (NDCAS). The other schools manage their own separate application processes.</p> <p><b>You can learn more about each of the schools at: <a href="https://aanmc.org/naturopathic-schools/">https://aanmc.org/naturopathic-schools/</a></b></p>		
<b>Information on N.D. Licensure</b>	<p>To become licensed as a primary care general practice physician by a state or jurisdiction that requires licensing, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate from a four-year, professional-level program at an AANMC-accredited naturopathic medical school.</li> <li>• Take and pass national board exams: Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Exam (NPLEX)</li> </ul> <p>U.S. states and territories currently offering licensure and registration to naturopathic physicians:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska</li> <li>• Arizona</li> <li>• California</li> <li>• Colorado</li> <li>• Connecticut</li> <li>• District of Columbia</li> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Kansas</li> <li>• Maine</li> <li>• Maryland</li> <li>• Massachusetts</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minnesota</li> <li>• Montana</li> <li>• New Hampshire</li> <li>• North Dakota</li> <li>• Oregon</li> <li>• Pennsylvania</li> <li>• Rhode Island</li> <li>• Utah</li> <li>• Vermont</li> <li>• Washington</li> <li>• U.S. Territories: Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska</li> <li>• Arizona</li> <li>• California</li> <li>• Colorado</li> <li>• Connecticut</li> <li>• District of Columbia</li> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Kansas</li> <li>• Maine</li> <li>• Maryland</li> <li>• Massachusetts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minnesota</li> <li>• Montana</li> <li>• New Hampshire</li> <li>• North Dakota</li> <li>• Oregon</li> <li>• Pennsylvania</li> <li>• Rhode Island</li> <li>• Utah</li> <li>• Vermont</li> <li>• Washington</li> <li>• U.S. Territories: Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands</li> </ul>
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<b>Timing of Application</b>	<p>Some N.D. programs have only one start date per year, in the fall. Others offer additional start dates in the winter, spring, or summer. Schools with multiple start dates tend to have larger class sizes in the fall and smaller class sizes on other start dates.</p> <p>All N.D. programs practice rolling admissions, which means that they will review applications as soon as they are complete. It is to your advantage to submit your application 1-2 months in advance of the deadline so that the admissions committees can review your file and contact you if there are deficiencies in your application that you can remedy before the deadline.</p> <p>Applications typically open one year in advance of their start dates. Due to the variability in start dates at different schools, we recommend that you create a spreadsheet listing your schools of interest and their application deadlines so that you can plan accordingly.</p>		

**Letters of Recommendation**

N.D. programs typically request a total of 2 to 5 letters of recommendation. Check each school's website to determine their specific LOR assortment requirements. **Please provide each of your evaluators with a copy of our *Pre-Health Guidelines to Recommenders* form.**

*Recommended assortment of traditional recommendation letters:*

- One from an academic faculty member, ideally one who has taught you in a lecture or seminar course. Ask this person to comment upon your intellectual engagement as a student. Biology (MCDB, EBIO, IPHY, or NRSC) or Chemistry faculty are preferred, but a strong letter from a non-science faculty member is more strategic than an average letter from a science faculty member.
- One from a work/volunteer supervisor. Ask this person to speak to traits such as the following:
  - Ability to handle stressful situations
  - Business management skills
  - Commitment to upholding high ethical standards
  - Demonstration of tolerance, compassion and empathy
  - Initiative
  - Maturity
  - Problem solving skills
- Some N.D. programs request a letter of recommendation from a healthcare clinician with whom you've worked, volunteered, or shadowed. A naturopathic physician is preferred, but it is most important to select a supervising clinician (from any licensed healthcare field) who can describe your understanding of the realities of health care, your approach to interacting with patients and staff, and your expression of intellectual curiosity in the clinical setting.
- [Optional] One to two more letters from writers from any of the above categories.