



## **Podiatrist**

### **Work Activities/Work Locations:**

- Podiatrists, or doctors of podiatric medicine (DPM), diagnose and treat ailments, injuries, and diseases of the foot and the lower leg.
- They are trained to understand problems of the human foot, perform diagnostic tests, and administer treatment for foot injuries, abnormalities, and disorders or diseases.
- They may perform surgery, give medications, and may fit artificial foot devices (prosthetics) or corrective support devices (orthotics) to the foot and lower leg to correct skeletal deformities and improve mobility.
- Podiatrists consult with patient's physicians as well as refer patients to specialists for diagnostic and treatment of symptoms related to the foot disorder or disease.
- Podiatrists work in a variety of healthcare settings including working in their private offices, hospitals, clinics, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), public health agencies, and nursing homes.

### **Advantages & Disadvantages:**

- Podiatrists say their work is interesting because they deal with many different medical problems.
- They enjoy helping people and teaching them about proper foot care.
- Those who are self-employed enjoy the independence this gives them.
- They dislike the time and energy spent on completing paperwork for insurance companies.

### **Method of Entry:**

- Students interested in this field must complete a minimum of three years of college before applying for a podiatry school.
- Most, 90%, earn a bachelor's degree prior to applying to a podiatry school.
- Prerequisites for admission to a school of podiatric medicine include the completion of at a minimum of 90 semester hours of undergraduate college study, an acceptable grade point average, and suitable scores on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). Academic minimum course requirements can vary slightly for different schools. Most require 8 semester hours each of biology, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, physics, all with laboratory components, and 6 hours of English.
- Admission into accredited podiatry school requires a multi-step application process including resumé, MCAT scores, personal statement, and letters of recommendations.
- Admission into podiatry school is VERY competitive. As there are many qualified applicants NOT everyone gets in.
- Podiatrists must be licensed. To qualify, students must first graduate from an accredited school of podiatry then pass state written and oral tests.

- Some states require podiatrists to complete internships prior to applying for licenses.
- Some require podiatrists to complete a specific number of continuing education credits in order to renew their licenses.

### **Helpful High School Courses & Experiences:**

- Students should take a college preparatory curriculum.
- Helpful high school courses would include anatomy & physiology, biology, chemistry, algebra, foreign language (minimum of two years), public speaking, and statistics & probability.

### **Education & Training:**

- Colleges of podiatric medicine offer a 4-year program whose core curriculum is similar to that in others schools of medicine.
- During the first 2 years, students receive classroom instruction in basic science, including anatomy, chemistry, pathology, and pharmacology.
- Third-and fourth-year students have clinical rotations in private practice, hospitals, and clinics. During these rotations, they learn how to take general and podiatric histories, perform routine physical examinations, interpret tests and findings, make diagnosis, and perform therapeutic procedures.
- Graduates receive the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) degree and are called doctors.
- Most graduates complete a hospital residency program after receiving a DPM.
- Residency programs last from 1 to 3 years. During this time, residents receive advanced training in podiatric medicine, surgery and serve clinical rotations in anesthesiology, internal medicine, pathology, radiology, emergency medicine. During this time residents can receive advanced training.
- Residencies lasting more than 1 year provide more extensive training in specialty areas.

### **Advancement Opportunities:**

- Can be involved in upper level teaching, research, and medical management.

### **Salary:**

- Typical Salary Range (Wisconsin):\$80,261 to \$123,044 per year.
- Typical Salary Range (National): \$44,091 to \$149,255 per year.

### **Hours:**

- Podiatrists usually work 40 hours a week.
- They can work weekends, nights, and holidays.

**Employment Information (Wisconsin):**

- Number Employed in 2000: 40
- Expected Employment in 2010: 50
- Percent Employment Growth (2000–2010): 25%

**College/University Education:**

- There are 7 colleges of podiatry medicine in the U.S. It takes four years to obtain a doctorate degree in podiatry. Residency (1-3 yrs) usually follows.
- About 1000 applicants apply to podiatric medical schools each year. First year enrollments are between 550-650, so understand acceptance IS competitive.
- Undergraduate courses can be taken at any postsecondary school as long as prerequisites courses are satisfied and MCAT admissions test taken.

**Professional Organizations & Additional Information:**

- See Wisconsin Health Careers Website: [www.wihealthcareers.org](http://www.wihealthcareers.org)