

## **Pharmacist**

Pharmacists dispense prescription medications to patients and offer expertise in the safe use of prescriptions. They also may conduct health and wellness screenings, provide immunizations, oversee the medications given to patients, and provide advice on healthy lifestyles.

*Pharmacists typically do the following:*

- Fill prescriptions, verifying instructions from physicians on the proper amounts of medication to give to patients
- Check whether prescriptions will interact negatively with other drugs that a patient is taking or any medical conditions the patient has
- Instruct patients on how and when to take a prescribed medicine and inform them about potential side effects from taking the medicine
- Give flu shots and, in most states, other vaccinations
- Advise patients about general health topics, such as diet, exercise, and managing stress, and on other issues, such as what equipment or supplies would be best to treat a health problem
- Complete insurance forms and work with insurance companies to ensure that patients get the medicines they need
- Oversee the work of Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacists in training
- Keep records and do other administrative tasks
- Teach other healthcare practitioners about proper medication therapies for patients

Some Pharmacists who own their pharmacy or manage a chain pharmacy spend time on business activities, such as inventory management. With most drugs, Pharmacists use standard dosages from pharmaceutical companies. However, some Pharmacists create customized medications by mixing ingredients themselves, a process known as compounding.

*The following are examples of types of Pharmacists:*

**Community Pharmacists** work in retail stores such as chain drug stores or independently owned pharmacies. They dispense medications to patients and answer any questions that patients may have about prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, or any health concerns that the patient may have. They also may provide some primary care services such as giving flu shots.

**Clinical Pharmacists** work in hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare settings. They spend little time dispensing prescriptions. Instead, they are involved in direct patient care. Clinical Pharmacists may go on rounds in a hospital with a physician or healthcare team. They recommend medications to give to patients and oversee the dosage and timing of the delivery of those medications. They also may conduct

some medical tests and offer advice to patients. For example, Pharmacists working in a diabetes clinic may counsel patients on how and when to take medications, suggest healthy food choices, and monitor patients' blood sugar.

**Consultant Pharmacists** advise healthcare facilities or insurance providers on patient medication use or improving pharmacy services. They also may give advice directly to patients, such as helping seniors manage their prescriptions.

**Pharmaceutical industry Pharmacists** work in areas such as marketing, sales, or research and development. They may design or conduct clinical drug trials and help to develop new drugs. They may also help to establish safety regulations and ensure quality control for drugs.

### **Work Environment**

Pharmacists work in pharmacies, including those in drug, general merchandise, and grocery stores. They also work in hospitals and other healthcare facilities. Most Pharmacists work full time. Because many pharmacies are open at all hours, some Pharmacists work nights and weekends.

[Watch a video about being a Pharmacist](#)

**Top Local Employers:** CVS Health, Anthem Blue Cross, Stanford Health Care, Lucille Packard Children's Hospital, Walgreens

**Median Pay**  
\$163,060

**Job Growth (2020-2025)**  
1%

### **Education and Training**

Pharmacists must have a Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), a 4-year professional degree. They must also be licensed, which requires passing two exams.

### **Local Education:**

[Touro University](#)

[University of California at San Francisco](#)



**For More Information:**

[American Pharmacists Association](#)

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)



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