



American Medical Women's Association
The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

How Do I Choose a College

There are many factors that you will weigh when you choose a college. Know that medical schools admit students from many different types of schools: public, private, large, small, prestigious and not so prestigious. What is important is that your school have a strong health sciences programs, that you feel you would be happy at your chosen school, and that you strive to maintain a high grade point average (GPA). Health Sciences Program is a broad term used to cover all college tracks in the health care field. Besides pre-med programs, it may include nursing, respiratory technology, medical technology, and physician assistant programs.

There is no one best college to attend to prepare for a career in medicine. For various reasons, not everybody will attend a college with a strong premed program. Your goals should be to make the most of what your college offers and to excel in your classes. Let your college work show that you are capable of excellence.

Things to Consider:

It's important that the school you choose focuses on health sciences. When you visit a college, ask questions about their health sciences program:

How many people are in their health sciences program? Small health science programs may indicate that the school does not focus on training future physicians. Different schools have different "specialties" and it's important that the school you choose focuses on health sciences and not business, for example. Some small schools can offer some great advantages, such as better research opportunities (i.e., actual hands-on experience with experiments). They also offer the opportunity to get to know science professors better, although larger schools may have more classes to choose from and offer more extracurricular activities. Know that there are advantages and disadvantages to both and weigh your options carefully.

What is the percentage of applicants admitted to medical school from this college? The percentage of applicants who are accepted is a good indication of how well a particular school prepares students for medical school.

Does the school have separate science classes for premed students or do students with other majors attend the same science classes? Some schools, especially those with small premed programs, will have shared science classes for premed students and other majors such as nursing and physical education, who share similar required coursework. It is important that your science classes be taken with premed students and those who are preparing for other graduate studies. Certain other majors are just not as rigorous and competitive. You need your peer classmates to be at or near the same level as you so that you can maximize your learning experience.

- Does the school have an office and counselors who focus on placement for students wishing to obtain an advanced degree such as a medical degree? These counselors can help you choose your classes wisely and can also help with the application process.
- How many students are in each class? In some schools enrollment in introductory level science classes can be huge. However, as students advance to higher levels, the number of students should decrease considerably. Small classes permit individualized attention and allow you to build a rapport with professors. This greatly enhances your education and provides you with people to call on for letters of recommendation down the road.
- Who teaches the classes - professors or teaching assistants? In some schools professors spend the majority of their time working on research and assign a teaching assistant to lecture for most of the classes. Though some teaching assistants are excellent, talented professionals, in general, it is better to be taught by faculty.

- Medical schools are seeking well-rounded applicants. Check to see if extracurricular opportunities that interest you are offered by the college.