



**PEDIATRIC
ASSOCIATES**

What is a Physician Assistant?

Q. What is a physician assistant?

A. A physician assistant is a health professional licensed by the state to practice medicine with the supervision of a physician. PAs provide a broad range of medical services that traditionally have been performed by physicians. The PA works as a member of a team with his or her supervising physician as the leader of the team. PAs have long been recognized as quality health care providers.

Q. What does a physician assistant do?

A. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, physician assistants perform physical exams, diagnose illnesses, develop treatment plans, order and interpret lab tests, provide patient education and preventative health care counseling, and prescribe medications.

Q. How does one become a physician assistant?

A. All PAs must first graduate from a nationally accredited physician assistant program, then pass a national certification exam and be licensed by the state. The typical person applying to a PA educational program has a bachelor's degree and some health care experience. A PA's education doesn't stop after graduation, though. To be knowledgeable about new medical advances, PAs are committed to lifelong learning. PAs take continuing medical education classes throughout their careers and sit for a national recertification exam every six years.

Q. Have physician assistants been accepted on the health care team?

A. PAs enjoy collegial relationship with other health professionals because physician assistants have demonstrated their commitment to patients and their competence in delivering quality medical care. Their training as team players enables them to work with others to ensure appropriate patient care in all settings.

Excerpts taken from pamphlet "Q&A about physician assistants" by the American Academy of Physicians Assistants.

Meet Our Physician Assistants



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