

## What is a doctor of osteopathy (DO)?

A practicing doctor of osteopathy (DO) is a fully trained, qualified, and licensed physician. DOs diagnose and treat illnesses, prescribe medication, and perform surgery just like medical doctors (MDs).

**A DO completes a traditional residency program,  
can be licensed in all states,  
can practice in the same health care facilities,  
and has the same rights and responsibilities as an MD.**



## What distinguishes a DO from an MD?

Although most of what DOs and MDs do is identical, there are some differences in philosophy and practice:

- DOs emphasize treating the patient as a whole, with consideration for overall physical and psychological well-being. Although many MDs have the same approach, it is a focus of osteopathy training and practice
- DOs enter primary care specialties such as family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, more often than MDs, but they can practice in any specialty they choose
- DOs receive training in osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM)

## About Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine

Osteopathic manipulative medicine involves hands-on techniques for diagnosing, treating, and preventing illness or injury. It includes a thorough understanding of the body's system of nerves, muscles, and bones and how they interact in health and illness.

While all DOs receive training in osteopathic manipulative medicine, not all of them perform the techniques. Call your DO's office to confirm whether he or she offers osteopathic manipulative techniques.

## Examinations, Accreditation, and Licensing

Like MDs, DOs must pass licensing exams. The same state medical boards license DOs and MDs. DOs also must practice in accredited and licensed health care facilities during postgraduate training.

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) accredits all DO residency programs. Currently, the AOA, American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), and ACGME are in the process of implementing a single, unified accreditation system.



## It's Your Choice!

Whether you choose a DO or an MD as your health care practitioner, you can feel assured knowing that Summit Medical Group practitioners are trained, licensed, and certified to offer you the comprehensive, quality, coordinated, and individualized care you expect and deserve.

**To learn more about your Summit Medical Group practitioner, visit [summitmedicalgroup.com](http://summitmedicalgroup.com) and search on her or his name. Your practitioner's profile will include details about his or her education, training, and experience.**