

Cardiologist

Cardiologists diagnose, assess and treat patients with defects and diseases of the heart and the blood vessels, which are known as the cardiovascular ^[1] system.

Two doctors and nurse on a ward

Life as a cardiologist

You'll improve patients' quality of life after a life-changing event such as a heart attack, heart failure or a heart rhythm disorder.

You'll also be involved in understanding diseases, how they progress and can be prevented.

You'll care for adult patients with conditions such as:

- angina (chest pain caused by narrowing of the coronary arteries)
- arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat)
- heart murmurs ^[2] due to heart valve disease
- cardiomyopathy (disease of the heart muscle) with heart failure including pulmonary
- oedema ^[3] (accumulation of fluid)
- coronary artery thrombosis ^[4] or myocardial infarction (heart attack) often associated with high blood pressure (hypertension ^[5]) and high cholesterol
- diseases of the arteries (atherosclerosis, arteritis, atheroma)
- hole in the heart and other forms of congenital heart disease

Working as a cardiologist, you'll be involved in an often fast-moving and dynamic field of medicine.

You'll be expected to deliver first-class emergency treatment in life and death situations while being comfortable working at the cutting-edge of new therapies.

Your emotional resilience will also be challenged as your patients will often require palliative care.

How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your foundation training ^[6] after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, SAS doctors ^[7] and

consultants on the ['Pay for doctors'](#) ^[8] page.

How about the benefits?

- make a difference
- flexible and part-time working
- high income early in your career
- work anywhere in the world
- excellent pension scheme
- good holiday entitlement
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

Must-have skills

- excellent communication skills to manage a wide range of relationships with colleagues, and patients and their families
- emotional resilience, a calm temperament and the ability to work well under pressure
- teamwork and the capacity to lead multidisciplinary teams
- problem-solving and diagnostic skills
- outstanding organisational ability and effective decision-making skills
- first-class time and resource management for the benefit of patients

Entry requirements

Your first step is medical school. Typically, you'll need excellent GCSEs and three A or A* passes at A level including chemistry for a five-year undergraduate degree in medicine. Many medical schools also ask for biology and others may require maths or physics.

If you already have a degree, you could study for a four-year postgraduate degree in medicine.

You'll need to pass an interview and admissions test. You'll be asked to show how you demonstrate the NHS values such as compassion and respect.

Some medical schools look to recruit a mix of students from different backgrounds and geographical areas, so your educational and economic background and family circumstances could be considered as part of your application.

"Cardiology appealed as you see patients throughout their journey, starting and finishing in outpatients, and continuing through imaging, treatment and management in a coronary care or high dependency unit."

[Read Judith's story](#) ^[9].

What are my chances of starting a career as a cardiologist?

In 2020, there were 533 applications for 131 specialty training places.

How to become a cardiologist

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year foundation programme ^[10] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training ^[11] to become a cardiologist, which will take a minimum of seven years (set to increase to a minimum of eight years from 2022).

You may be able to train part time, for example for health reasons or if you have family or caring responsibilities.

Where a career as a cardiologist can take you

As your career progresses, you'll have the opportunity to specialise in the treatment of one or two heart conditions, for example:

- interventional cardiology
- adult congenital heart disease
- cardiac imaging
- electrophysiology including ablation
- electrical device therapy
- heart failure including cardiac transplantation and support devices

You could:

- specialise in academic cardiology which will help advance cardiovascular ^[1] scientific knowledge and therapeutic options
- specialise in new areas such as inherited cardiac conditions, cardio-oncology ^[12] and interventional valve therapy
- teach medical students or postgraduate students in training and get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector

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- **Consultant Cardiologist**

Keighley, BD20 6TD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Airedale NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Cardiologist job \(opens in a new window\)](#)

[13]

- **Consultant Cardiologist/Electrophysiologist**

Coventry, CV2 2DX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Cardiologist/Electrophysiologist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [14]

- **Consultant Cardiologist with an Interest in Imaging**

Gillingham Kent, ME7 5NY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Medway NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Cardiologist with an Interest in Imaging job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [15]

- **Further information**

These organisations have further information about being a cardiologist, particularly as your career progresses, so take a look.

- [Royal College of Physicians](#) [16]
- [Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh](#) [17]
- [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#) [18]
- [British Cardiovascular Society](#) [19]
- [Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board](#) [20]
- [British Cardiovascular Intervention Society](#) [21]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Neurophysiology](#) [22]
- [Renal medicine](#) [23]
- [Respiratory medicine](#) [24]
- [General internal medicine](#) [25]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/cardiology?career=AHP&field_field_role=513&page=7

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