Medical Careers with an Associate's Degree

Many lucrative health career options without a four-year college degree…

If you are seeking a lucrative career without obtaining an undergraduate degree, there are many careers in healthcare that are in demand and available to graduates of the appropriate associate's degree program.

An associate's degree is typically a two-year program offered by a technical school or community college that is open to high school graduates who meet other application requirements as well. These careers offer incomes that are competitive with graduates of a bachelor's program. The benefit of these careers is that the degrees are not as expensive nor time-consuming as a four-year college degree.

## Cardiovascular Technologist (CVT)

## Cardiovascular technologists work in the cath lab with cardiologists to help perform a variety of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures including cardiac catheterizations, and balloon angioplasty. The average salary for CVTs averages around $50,000 annually, but top performers can earn over $70,000 per year.

## Respiratory Therapist

**Respiratory therapists help patients who have difficulty breathing due to cardiopulmonary disorders, lung disease, and a variety of causes. Tasks include administering oxygen or other aerosol mixtures, mists and inhalants.**

**While some more advanced jobs in respiratory therapy do require a bachelor's or graduate degree, there are some entry level positions available with an associate's degree from an accredited program.**

**The job outlook for these roles is expected to be "much faster than average" and income averages around $52,000 annually.**

## [Physical Therapy Assistant](https://www.verywell.com/physical-therapy-4014670)

## Physical therapy assistants (PTAs) work with physical therapists to provide rehabilitation to patients recovering from injury, illness, or trauma which affected their mobility. PTA salaries average about $46,000 per year which is a competitive salary for an associate's level of education.

## [Occupational Therapy Assistant](https://www.verywell.com/a-certified-occupational-therapy-assistant-job-description-2510004)

## Occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) assist occupational therapists in providing treatment to clients who are in need of cognitive or physical rehabilitation as a result of an illness, brain disorder, accident, or trauma. Annual salaries for OTAs average just over $50,000 annually, while the top ten percent of earners can bring in over $70,000 per year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Dental Hygienist

## If working in a dentist's office appeals to you, some dental hygienist jobs are available with an accredited associate's degree. Dental hygienists are responsible for examining patients' teeth, cleaning, and checking for cavities and other potential problems. With a job growth outlook that is "much faster than average" and an average annual salary of $66,000, dental hygienist is a very strong career option, particularly for a career not requiring a bachelor's degree.

## [Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (Ultrasound Tech)](https://www.verywell.com/ultrasound-technologist-2371663)

## Diagnostic sonographers specialize in operating imaging equipment that allows doctors to view internal organs through the use of sound wave technology. Ultrasound technologist is another solid career option for an associate's degree level of education. Sonographers can work in hospitals or doctors' offices, and the average salary is in the $60,000 range and up, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## [Surgical Technologist](https://www.verywell.com/scrub-tech-what-they-do-3157168)

## If working in an operating room sounds exciting to you, a career as a surgical technologist will allow you to be in on the action. Surgical techs assist surgeons during surgery with a variety of tasks from preparing the room and instruments, to helping with suturing or handling of instruments during the operation. With employment growth projected as "must faster than average" by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, this is a stable career option, if not the most lucrative one requiring an associate's degree. Average salaries are around $40,000 with an upside of over $50,000 for the top ten percent of earners in this role.

By [**Andrea Clement Santiago**](https://www.verywell.com/andrea-clement-santiago-1735904)

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## Carl Marshbanks, MBA