

Anesthesiology

Anesthesiologist Job Description: An anesthesiologist is a medical specialist who makes all the medical decisions about anesthetizing a patient for surgery and who is responsible for the safety and well-being of the patient before, during, and immediately following the surgical procedure. This includes maintaining the patient in a state of controlled unconsciousness (while under general anesthesia), providing pain relief and monitoring the patient's critical life functions (breathing, heart rate and heart rhythm, blood pressure, body temperature, blood oxygen saturation) as they are affected throughout surgical, obstetrical or other medical procedures.

Anesthesiologists give medications to make the patient lose consciousness, which keeps the patient from feeling pain during surgery. At the end of the surgical procedure, the anesthesiologist stops giving the medicines which keep the patient asleep. At other times, an anesthesiologist may use a "block" type of anesthesia which numbs a part of the body, so despite the patient being awake during surgery, the patient is not feeling any pain.

In some surgical procedures, the patient does not need to be unconscious or numb, but just needs to be sedated to help them through a procedure that is less painful. In that case, anesthesiologists monitor the patient's heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen saturation while also providing the sedating medications.

The anesthesiologist's role extends beyond the operating room. First, the anesthesiologist is responsible for the preoperative assessment of the patient, making medical judgments about what the best anesthesia plan is for that individual based on his or her current health, what medications they are taking, the type of surgery, etc. The anesthesiologist also is responsible for the well-being of the patient postoperatively while the person emerges from the effects of the anesthesia. In addition, anesthesiologists use their expertise in intensive care units to help stabilize critically ill or critically injured patients. They are often involved in the management of acute postoperative pain, chronic pain and cancer pain; in cardiac and respiratory resuscitation; in blood transfusion therapies; and in respiratory therapy. As for the role of the anesthesiologist in pain management, this could either occur in the "acute" setting - the first few days after surgery, or in a "chronic" setting - months or years later.

Anesthesiology career steps: I knew I wanted to go into medicine before high school. I selected science courses and advanced placement classes in high school as well as in college. In addition to my major subjects and college requirements for my degree (biology in my case), I also had pre-med requirements to take. Late in college, I took the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test) as a requirement for the application process for medical school. Additionally, there were face-to-face interviews, personal recommendations, as well as my college transcript involved in my acceptance process to medical school.

After graduation from medical school, I completed a medical internship followed by three years of anesthesiology and all its areas of specialization such as cardiac, major vascular, neuroanesthesia, orthopedics, pediatrics, ENT, outpatient techniques, critical care medicine, etc.

"How does someone become an anesthesiologist?" Here's a summary: In high school, students can prepare for a medical career by concentrating on the advanced science classes such as biology and chemistry. Get involved in many activities and stretch yourself educationally. Consider extra training on computers and in learning a second language, possibly Spanish. Consider volunteering at a hospital where you will be able to see firsthand what it's like to work around health care professionals, helping many people who need their help.

How did I decide on an Anesthesiology career? After thinking back on my rotations in medical school and residency and remembering which rotations were the most enjoyable, I chose anesthesiology. I liked the fact that Anesthesiology requires a lot of thinking and preparatory work. I also like the hands on aspect and the satisfaction of taking a patient through a difficult procedure.

Current Need: As long as there is a demand for surgery and relief from pain, there will continue to be a need for qualified anesthesiologists because of their unique qualifications and medical expertise. The number of surgeries has been on the rise in recent years, totaling more than 40 million a year, and is almost evenly split between surgeries in hospitals and in outpatient facilities.

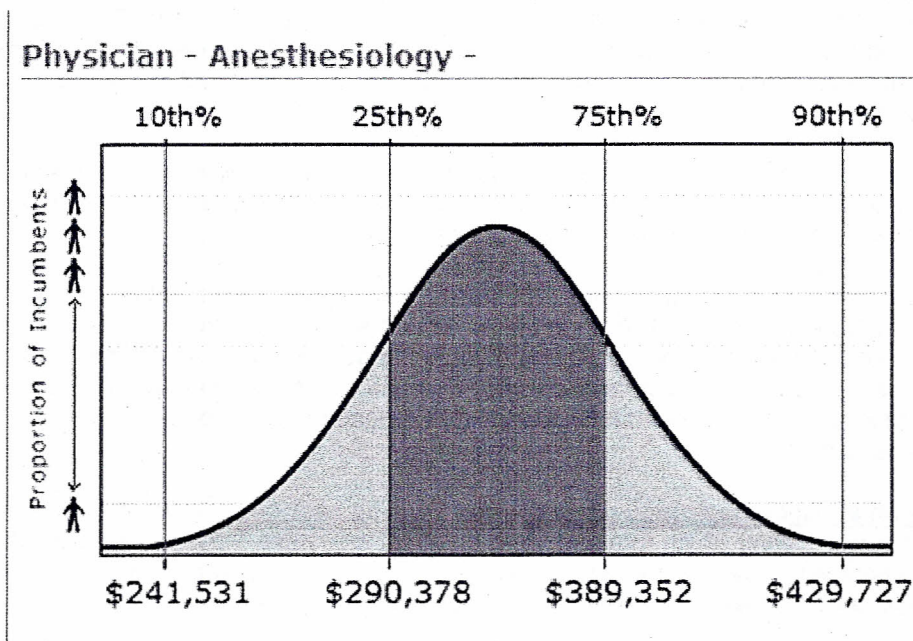
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Personal Issues and Rewards: Some people also want to know what are the fears, stress factors and emotional involvement connected with being an anesthesiologist. Anesthesiologists need to rise early in the morning. During internship and residency, trainees work 8 - 12 hour and 24 hour days in cycles. Real-world anesthesiologists probably average 10-12 hour days with night call every four to five days. To be a good anesthesiologist, you must be able to remain vigilant for many hours. Yes, it can be stressful, but many jobs have the stress without the rewards. Being a doctor has many rewards. Anesthesiologists have a short-term but intense relationship with their patients: calming them before surgery, getting them through surgery safely and without pain, and making sure they have recovered enough to go home or be admitted to a regular hospital floor. The patient's "thank you" and smiles make it all worthwhile.

The medical specialty of anesthesiology involves many aspects of patient care and includes many challenges, diversity, flexibility and rewards. People may ask "What has been most rewarding about your job as an anesthesiologist?" My response is: "Through the work I do in helping people survive trauma, like a car accident, or get well from an illness, like cancer or a heart attack, I know that I have personally saved hundreds of people who otherwise would have died. That is incredibly rewarding!"

What is the job outlook for an Anesthesiologist? Currently, the job outlook is good. A few years back, a number of residencies closed their doors or dropped a number of slots per year. That created fewer people coming out of residency programs at a time when increasing numbers of practicing anesthesiologists were retiring or cutting back on their hours.

What factors can affect Anesthesiology salaries? Anesthesiology salaries are influenced by the level of the hospital that one works at (i.e. a trauma center vs. a small community hospital). University hospitals pay far lower, but may allow Anesthesiologists time for research, teaching, etc. Self-employed anesthesiologists are paid by the case - if you work hard, you are paid for that hard work. As a hospital employee, I am probably paid more than what I could contract with insurance companies. The anesthesiologist's bill for services, whether self-employed or hospital employed, is a separate bill to the patient, and is not included in the hospital bill. In addition, there is a degree of camaraderie in a University hospital setting that is not typically found in private practice.



www1.salary.com/Anesthesiologist-salary.html

The median expected salary for an anesthesiologist in the United States is \$345,005, as of September, 2010.