

# Education Today / Career Tomorrow

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## Surgical Technician

Surgical technicians assist in surgical operations under the supervision of surgeons, registered nurses, or other surgical personnel. Surgical technicians are members of operating room teams, which most commonly include surgeons, anesthesiologists, and circulating nurses.

Before an operation, surgical technicians help prepare the operating room by setting up surgical instruments and equipment, sterile drapes, and sterile solutions. They

also assemble equipment. Technicians also get patients ready for surgery by washing, shaving, and disinfecting incision sites. They transport patients to the operating room, help position them on the operating table, and cover them with sterile surgical drapes. Technicians also observe patients' vital signs, check charts, and help the surgical team put on sterile gowns and gloves.

During surgery, technicians pass instruments and other

sterile supplies to surgeons and surgeon assistants. They may hold retractors, cut sutures, and help count sponges, needles, supplies, and instruments. Some operate sterilizers, lights, or suction machines, and help operate diagnostic equipment.

After an operation, surgical technicians may help transfer patients to the recovery room and clean and restock the operating room.

Source: *The Occupational Outlook Handbook*

### Job Outlook

Employment of surgical technicians is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations, as the volume of surgeries increases. The number of surgical procedures is expected to rise as the population grows and ages.

Older people, including the baby boom generation, who generally require more surgical procedures, will account for a larger portion of the general population.

Job opportunities will be best for technicians who are certified.

### Money Matters

**Career:** Surgical Technician

**Job Description:** Prepares and maintains medical equipment for surgical procedures. Follows hospital regulations and industry procedures to tend to patient during pre-operation procedures. Performs pre-operation preparations for the patient and medical equipment. May be required to transport patient to and from the operating room.

**Salary:** \$31,783-\$46,327 annually

For more information on how to start your career as a Surgical Technician, please contact:

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### Education Needed

Surgical technicians receive their training in formal programs offered by community colleges, career preparation and technical schools, universities, hospitals, and the military. Programs last from 9 to 24 months and lead to a certificate, diploma, or associate degree. High school graduation normally is required for admission.

Recommended high school courses include health, biology, chemistry, and mathematics. Programs provide classroom education and supervised clinical experience. Students take courses in anatomy, physiology, microbiology, pharmacology, professional ethics, and medical terminology.

Other topics covered include the care and safety of patients during surgery, sterile techniques, and surgical procedures. Students learn to sterilize instruments, prevent and control infection, and handle special drugs, solutions, supplies, and equipment.

Most employers prefer to hire certified technicians. Continuing education or reexamination is required to maintain certification, which must be renewed every 4 years.

Technicians advance by specializing in a particular area of surgery, such as neurosurgery or open heart surgery. With additional training, some technicians advance to first assistant.



"Once a student graduates from the Surgical Technician program at MTI, there are so many career options, including hospitals, surgical centers, doctors offices, and out patient care centers. In class, we focus on hands-on experience so the students have the best foundation to start their careers. Surgery itself is the most exciting part of this job. When surgery is performed, you get the satisfaction of a job accomplished." - Jennie Harrison

"I got into the Surgical Technician program because I have always been interested in the medical field; I like surgery. I was previously a Mortgage Broker, but needed to get out of that market. I feel that the health industry is only going to grow, especially with Baby Boomers retiring. My goal is to continue my education and become a CRNA. I have two small children and I feel like this is an incredible career choice for my family." - Kimberly Maurer

Teacher



Student

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