

Surgical Assistant



What do they do?

Surgical Assistants work under the direct supervision of surgeons. The Surgical Assistant is a crucial part of the surgical team as they have a hands on role during procedures. Surgical Assistants help the surgeon with tasks such as sponging, suturing, suctioning, holding retractors and treating wounds. Surgical Assistants do all of the work that surgical technologists do, plus more advanced tasks.

Where do they work?

Surgical Assistants work in hospitals and ambulatory surgical clinics under the direction of surgeons. They typically work on surgical units and in surgery rooms.

Pay:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly income for Surgical Assistants is \$49,710.



Education:

There are various educational routes that can be taken to become a Surgical Assistant. Surgical Assistant programs take 1 to 2 years to complete and some require an associate's degree to apply. Some Surgical Assistant programs accept applicants who have worked as a Surgical Technologist for three or more years.

Surgical Assistant Training in WI:

Madison College: www.madisoncollege.edu

Milwaukee Area Technical College: www.matc.edu

High School students interested in becoming a Surgical Assistant should take courses in math, biology, medical terminology, and anatomy and physiology.

Accreditation:

Education programs for Surgical Assistants are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

www.caahep.org



Professional Association:

Surgical Assistants can join the National Surgical Assistant Association (NSAA).

www.nsaa.net



Certification:

Surgical Assistants can be certified nationally by the following organizations:

The American Board of Surgical Assistants (ABSAs):

www.absa.net



The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA):

www.nbstsa.org



The National Commission for the Certification of Surgical Assistants (NCCSA):

www.nsaa.net



Advancement Opportunities:

A Surgical Assistant can find advancement opportunities after gaining experience working in their field.

Advancement opportunities could include working in surgical specialties such as neurosurgery, orthopaedics, or cardiac surgery.

Important Skills:

- Ability to work closely with a team
- Strong communication skills
- Attention to detail
- Ability to adapt to new technologies
- Ability to work in high-stress environments



Job Outlook:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for Surgical Assistants is expected to grow 9 percent between 2020-2030, which is as fast as the average across all occupations.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Surgical Technologists,

www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/surgical-technologists.htm (visited September 08, 2021).

