



Health Career Directory

Cardiovascular Perfusionists

Overview

Cardiovascular Perfusionists work under the direct clinical supervision of an anaesthesiologist and a surgeon. They provide technical support in the direct application of extracorporeal (situated outside the body) perfusion techniques. A Cardiovascular Perfusionist also monitors patients' responses when they are undergoing open-heart surgery. They make sure that the patients' care is effective and safe.

Cardiovascular perfusion is the science that involves providing extracorporeal circulation in order to artificially support and temporarily replace a patient's respiratory and circulatory systems.

Clinical Perfusionists are expert members of the cardiac surgical team, and can provide lifesaving support to patients that need extracorporeal circulation. This includes, but is not limited to, major cardiothoracic, vascular, and transplant surgeries. They also support the critically ill patient.

Clinical Perfusionists are trained in the safe administration of blood products and drugs. They are experts in the implementation and management of blood salvage, intra-aortic balloon, and Ventricular Assist Devices (VAD's).

This profession is exciting and the employment opportunities are growing throughout the health care industry. This occupation pays well. It is also highly stimulating and interesting since no two days are ever the same.

Source: <http://www.bcit.ca/study/programs/6820ascert>

Who is suited for this occupation?

Cardiovascular Perfusionists are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- good problem-solving and communication skills
- good critical thinking skills, sound judgement, and patience
- compassionate, dependable, ethical, and mature
- ability to organize and arrange workload in collaboration with others
- ability to be precise and accurate
- strong social skills and leadership ability
- ability to manage high levels of stress related to life threatening situations and medical conditions

- self-disciplined, as well as self-motivated and the ability to multi-task in a complex and fast-paced environment
- physically fit
- ability to lift up to 20 kilograms is required in some clinical settings
- a clean record, no prior criminal background.

They should enjoy:

- working in a fast paced health care environment where they have a genuine interest in caring for people
- enjoy working directly with people who are unwell to help them get better
- working collaboratively with others in a team environment
- using standard and specialized equipment to gather assessments to provide proper care, and the performance of components, assemblies, and systems
- analyzing and diagnosing problems.

Who employs this professional?

Cardiovascular Perfusionists work in the operating rooms in acute/hospital settings. They work in both rural and urban settings, as part of the interdisciplinary team. In BC, they are employed by one of the six health authorities/employers.

They work shift hours, alternating weekends, and are often on call for emergency procedures.

Cardiovascular Perfusionists are very highly sought after health care professionals. In other words, they have no trouble finding work in their field.

Salary

Salary Range - \$40.78 – 43.04 per hour/\$79,000 - \$84,000 annually

Training and education required to become a Perfusionists

Entrance requirement

Bachelor's Degree

Plus ONE of the following:

Two years of current experience working as a Certified Respiratory Therapist or Critical Care RN.

In addition to successful completion of specific required post-secondary courses.

Most programs run every two years. Available seats into this program are limited. Go to the institution of your interest for the complete list of all entry requirements and intake application dates

Career Advancement

Cardiovascular perfusion can be a very rewarding profession. Most Cardiovascular Perfusionists stay in clinical practice for a long time. This is because they enjoy providing direct care to their patients, and working in a team environment.

Education program

British Columbia Institute of Technology

<http://www.bcit.ca/study/programs/6820ascert>

Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences

<http://www.michener.ca>

University of Montreal

<http://www.unmontreal.ca>

Financial assistance and bursaries

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtm

Association

The Canadian Society of Clinical Perfusion

<http://www.cscp.ca/english/links.asp>