Respiratory Therapists

Summary

Quick Facts: Respiratory Therapists	
2018 Median Pay	$60,280 per year $28.98 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Work Experience in a Related Occupation	None
On-the-job Training	None
Number of Jobs, 2018	134,000
Job Outlook, 2018-28	21% (Much faster than average)
Employment Change, 2018-28	27,900

What Respiratory Therapists Do

Respiratory therapists care for patients who have trouble breathing—for example, from a chronic respiratory disease, such as asthma or emphysema.

Work Environment

Most respiratory therapists work full time. Because they may work in medical facilities, such as hospitals that are always open, some may work evening, night, or weekend hours.

How to Become a Respiratory Therapist

Respiratory therapists typically need an associate's degree, but some have bachelor's degrees. Respiratory therapists are licensed in all states except Alaska; requirements vary by state.

Pay

The median annual wage for respiratory therapists was $60,280 in May 2018.

Job Outlook

Employment of respiratory therapists is projected to grow 21 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations. Growth in the middle-aged and elderly population will lead to an increased incidence of respiratory conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and pneumonia. These respiratory disorders can permanently damage the lungs or restrict lung function.

State & Area Data

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for respiratory therapists.

Similar Occupations

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of respiratory therapists with similar occupations.

More Information, Including Links to O*NET

Learn more about respiratory therapists by visiting additional resources, including O*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

What They Do ->

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Respiratory Therapists, on the Internet at https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/respiratory-therapists.htm (visited *January 18, 2020*).

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