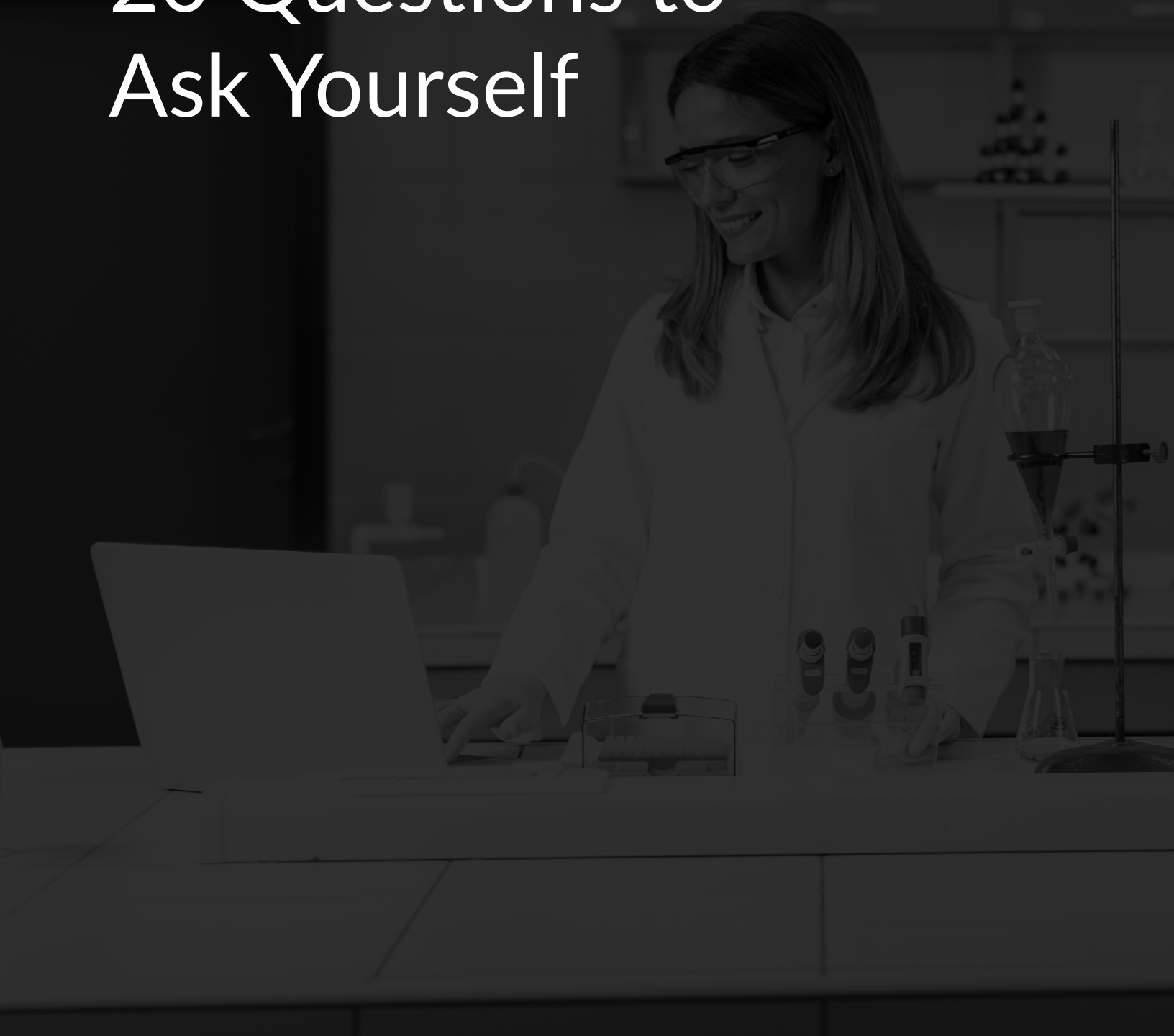




# SHOULD YOU GO TO MD OR DO SCHOOL?

## 20 Questions to Ask Yourself



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## 20 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

The medical school admissions process is not easy by any means — and it's only getting more competitive. From an [increasing number of applicants](#) every year to over half of the entire applicant pool receiving only rejections last year, it might be time to look at some other options. To stay on the safe side, consider a few [DO or Doctors of Osteopathic medical schools](#). It's understandable if you're not ready to let go of that MD dream, but it's definitely helpful to understand what makes DO schools different from MD programs so that you can keep your options open.

DO schools focus on training students in holistic patient care through an emphasis on natural treatments as methods of disease prevention. If you're worried that taking the osteopathic route could get in the way of your surgery dreams, fear not. Although most DO students go into primary care programs, they also have access to the National Resident Matching Program and can go into any specialty of choice if accepted. To help you understand which type of medical school better fits your application strategies and hopes for the future, we've asked questions to help guide you. Who knows? You might not even have realized that DO may be the correct route for you.

## MD




















1. Do you have a high GPA?
2. Do you have an MCAT score that falls within the median of MD schools?
3. Are you interested in increasing your chances of becoming a surgeon in the future?
4. Do you wish to write a shorter personal statement (4000 characters)?
5. Do you prefer to elaborate on your 3 most meaningful activities?  
(The AACOMAS doesn't have an option for this)
6. Would you prefer that you're educated in more symptom-based healing rather than relying on natural treatments?
7. Do you prefer a both science-driven education rather than to work under the DO philosophy?
8. Do you want to take the USMLE after graduation?
9. Do you only wish to work at a hospital under the National Residency Match program once you've graduated?
10. Would you prefer a longer residency (3-7 years)?

# DO

11. Do you have a lower GPA?
12. Is your MCAT score lower than the median at most MD schools?
13. Would you prefer to study the body holistically?
14. Does the osteopathic philosophy appeal to you?
15. Do you prefer to write a longer personal statement (5300 characters)?
16. Would you prefer a shorter activities list and to not expand on your 3 most important activities?
17. Are you more interested in going into family or general medicine once you graduate or would you rather increase your chances of being matched with a surgical program?
18. Do you only wish to be paired with one of the hospitals under the national National Residency Match Program or do you wish to be open to osteopathic hospitals alongside MD hospitals?
19. Would you prefer to take the COMLEX exam and have the option to take the USMLE after graduation?
20. Would you prefer a shorter residency? (2 years)

## MD VS. DO — UNDERSTANDING THE KEY DIFFERENCES

The following infographic outlines some of the key differences between MD and DO programs.

 <b>MD vs. DO Schools: What's the Difference?</b>			
MD Schools		DO Schools	
	~200		35
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS			
	7%		10.4%
AVERAGE ACCEPTANCE RATE			
	3.72		3.54
AVERAGE GPA OF ADMITTED STUDENTS			
	511		503.8
AVERAGE MCAT OF ADMITTED STUDENTS			
	AMCAS Application		AACOMAS Application
APPLICATION			
	National Residency Match Program		National Residency Match Program; 500 Osteopathic Residency Options
RESIDENCY OPTIONS			
	3-7 years		3-6 years
RESIDENCY DURATION			
	United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE)		Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination of the United States (COMLEX)
EXAM TO OBTAIN MEDICAL LICENSE			
	Symptom Focused		Holistic; Natural
TREATMENT APPROACH			

One of the main reasons behind interest in DO programs - besides a passion for the osteopathic medicine philosophy - becomes obvious when you look at the differences in the scores of admitted students. Since the competition keeps getting tougher, MD admissions committees are more likely to accept students with the most impressive GPAs and MCAT scores - A GPA of 3.72 and an MCAT score of 511 are not easy to obtain!

So to ensure that they are admitted to any medical school at all, students with lower numbers often turn to DO schools. However, you should remain aware of the fact that even though the numbers for enrolled students are lower, the average acceptance rate at DO schools is only 10.4%. It's low not only due to the limited number of schools which offer osteopathic programs, but also because the demand for any medical program is extremely high!

As you narrow your search for the right medical school, weigh the pros and cons of attending DO vs MD schools. The decision you make depends on your numbers, your academic interests, and career goals. If you feel like your GPA or MCAT score aren't good enough for medical colleges in the country, consider osteopathic medical schools. However, don't just apply to DO schools because you think it might be easier to get admitted. If you work on building your application through meaningful ways, demonstrate a genuine interest, and continue working hard throughout either medical school program, no medical specialty will be out of your reach.