



## What Is Osteopathic Medicine?

(NAPSA)—The way certain physicians care for patients is changing the way many people think about doctors.

No matter what their specialty, doctors of osteopathic medicine—commonly known as D.O.s—are taught to take a “whole person” approach to medicine, treating people, not just symptoms.

Osteopathic physicians and surgeons prescribe medicine, perform surgery and receive extra training in the musculoskeletal system. Like M.D.s, D.O.s must pass state licensing examinations. Both practice in fully accredited and licensed health care facilities.

One type of treatment that is incorporated into the training and practice of osteopathic physicians is osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT). With OMT, D.O.s use their hands to diagnose illness or injury and to encourage the body’s natural tendency toward good health.

### History of Osteopathic Medicine

Osteopathic medicine is a unique form of American medical care that was developed in 1874 by Dr. Andrew Taylor Still. He believed that many of the medications of his day were useless or even harmful. Dr. Still was one of the first in his time to study the attributes of good health so that he could better understand the process of disease.

In response, Dr. Still founded a philosophy of medicine based on ideas that date back to Hippocrates, the father of medicine. The philosophy focuses on the unity of all body parts. He identified the musculoskeletal system as a key element of health. He recognized the body’s ability to heal itself and stressed preventive



**From family medicine to ophthalmology, osteopathic physicians take a “whole person” approach to care.**

medicine, eating properly and keeping fit.

Dr. Still pioneered the concept of “wellness” more than 125 years ago. In today’s terms, personal health risks—such as smoking, high blood pressure, excessive cholesterol levels, stress and other lifestyle factors—are evaluated for each individual. In coordination with appropriate medical treatment, the osteopathic physician acts as a teacher to help patients take more responsibility for their own well-being and change unhealthy patterns.

D.O.s are fully licensed physicians able to prescribe medication and perform surgery. They treat people, not just symptoms.

To learn more about D.O.s and osteopathic medicine, visit the American Osteopathic Association’s Web site at [www.aoa-net.org](http://www.aoa-net.org) or call toll-free 1-800-621-1773.