Consider Human Ecology’s seven majors:

• Nutritional Sciences
• Human Biology, Health, and Society
• Human Development
• Policy Analysis and Management
• Biology and Society
• Fiber Science and Apparel Design
• Design and Environmental Analysis

Preparation for Career in Health

Any major can lead to a career in health and medicine

The College of Human Ecology offers a distinctive undergraduate education for students interested in careers in medicine, public health, and community health by addressing human needs from perspectives in nutrition and health, human development, economic and public policy, and design and technology. Premed students in Human Ecology benefit from a contemporary and interdisciplinary approach to learning that is broader in scope than a more traditional science curriculum. The health care field is wide and growing and your ambition need not be limited to becoming a physician. There are exciting opportunities in dentistry, dietetics, osteopathy, optometry, biomedical research, exercise science, pharmacology, physical therapy, chiropractic medicine, nursing, genetics counseling, nutritional epidemiology, health administration, medical ethics, health education, health policy, and public health.

Our programs approach health from a holistic perspective that focuses on wellness and prevention, and embrace the fact that health does not happen in a vacuum of biology and chemistry. As College of Human Ecology students are trained around the delivery of healthcare, they explore and analyze the societal components of well-being, such as economics, policy, nutrition, culture, and community and built environments, that influence our state of health and how we maintain, seek, and receive care. Students hone their skills in observation, analysis, and making connections to creatively solve problems around their areas of interest.

Choosing Your Major

There is no “premed” major at Cornell and Human Ecology’s seven major fields of study provide excellent preparation for health careers and medical school, and offer numerous options should students decide to pursue other career paths.
Selected Graduates

Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Academic Affairs (Human Development)
Jefferson Medical College; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dermatology resident (Human Biology, Health and Society)
New York University School of Medicine; New York, New York

Dietician (Nutritional Sciences)
Diabetes & Endocrinology Associates, PC; Atlanta, Georgia

Dietitian (Nutritional Sciences)
United States Army; Houston, Texas

Doctoral candidate, Clinical Psychology (Human Development)
Fordham University; Bronx, New York

Health care consultant (Policy Analysis and Management)
Deloitte & Touche; Boston, Massachusetts

MD and MPH Primary care doctor and researcher, Department of Health Policy (Human Development)
Mt. Sinai Medical Center; New York, New York

Medical student (Human Biology, Health and Society)
Cornell Weill Medical College; New York, New York

Medical student (Design and Environmental Analysis)
Jefferson Medical College; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Medical student (Biology and Society)
Johns Hopkins; Baltimore, Maryland

Medical student (Human Development)
New York College of Osteopathic Medicine; Old Westbury, New York

Medical student (Human Development)
Yale University; New Haven, Connecticut

Pediatric Radiologist (Biology and Society)
Harvard Medical School, Children’s Hospital Boston; Boston, Massachusetts

Pediatrician (Human Biology, Health and Society)
NY Presbyterian Hospital; New York, New York

Physician, Obstetrics-Gynecology (Policy Analysis and Management)
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Senior Associate for Public Health (Biology and Society)
Burness Communications; Bethesda, Maryland

Senior Financial Analyst (Human Biology, Health and Society)
New York University School of Medicine; New York, New York

It is advisable to choose a major that genuinely interests you, not one that you believe will gain you admission to graduate or professional school. Students typically perform better in subjects they enjoy. In addition, you will have developed compelling options if your career goals change, which sometimes occurs as students’ interests evolve and they discover other careers and attractive choices.

According to the AAMC’s Medical School Admissions Requirements, admission committees consider the characteristics of the undergraduate academic institution when reviewing applicants. Coursework at colleges known for rigorous academic standards, such as Human Ecology, frequently get greater weight.

Candidates’ personal attributes and experiences are also very important in the selection process. Students should choose undergraduate institutions that allow them to develop psychological maturity, self-discipline, judgment, compassion and empathy, understanding of issues related to diversity, communication skills, intellectual curiosity, resilience and leadership, to name a few.

Some medical schools also place value on research. In Human Ecology, the small and supportive environment allows students to work closely with faculty in research settings and to develop important professional mentoring relationships. In fact, approximately 75% of Human Ecology undergraduates participate in research at some point in their undergraduate career.

Of the recent Human Ecology graduates who pursued an advanced degree directly after college, almost 56 percent entered graduate or professional programs in medicine (31 percent) or health (25 percent).

Nutritional Sciences builds a strong foundation in chemistry and biology and examines the interrelationships of diet, nutrition, physiology, physical and mental health, fitness and well-being, and disease prevention.

Human Biology, Health, and Society combines biology and chemistry with introductory work in the social sciences for a broad perspective on public policy and human biology, mental and physical health, and human development.

It is especially appropriate for those interested in pediatrics, family medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, psychiatry, or geriatric medicine.

Policy Analysis and Management combines courses in economics, government, sociology, and ethics to offer students a better understanding of health care policy, public health, or hospital administration. Students also have the option of completing a 4+1 Masters in Health Administration through the college’s Sloan Program

Biology and Society prepares students to address the technical, social, and ethical challenges that arise when biological advancements clash with social and cultural forces, or impact human performance.

Fiber Science and Apparel Design offers an option in Fiber Science that provides a strong background in the physical sciences for the study of medicine or research into biomedical textiles such as synthetic skin, arteries, and sutures.

Design and Environmental Analysis has an option in Human Factors and Ergonomics that integrates biology, engineering, and art in ways that would be of special interest to anyone who plans to focus on preventive medicine or understand the implications of physical space on the practice of medicine and the design of hospitals, nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, and other health care facilities.

Global Health is offered as a minor through the Division of Nutritional Sciences and the College of Human Ecology and is open to all Cornell University students. The minor provides a foundation for examining issues in global health, enabling students, through classroom and field experiences, to develop the skills and experiences needed to shape their own unique career aspirations.

Resources and Support
Prehealth advisers and other counselors in the College of Human Ecology will help you plan your course of study, locate opportunities for practical experience in the health care field, and consider career options.

The college’s Career Exploration Center
is available to Human Ecology students as a resource where students can thoughtfully explore their career goals, whether in health and medicine, or beyond. Programming, online and published resources, and peer counselors help students proactively engage in finding a meaningful path after graduation and throughout their worklife.

The university-wide Health Careers Program works in concert with the College of Human Ecology’s advising to provide further information, resources, counseling, and advice for students interested in health professions, including orientation sessions during freshman and junior year and the publications Cornell Health Careers Guide for Preapplicants and Cornell Health Careers Guide for Applicants. Unlike many other institutions’ health career evaluation committees, Cornell University supports every student who uses this service and is applying to medical school. Students will begin working with the Cornell Health Careers Evaluation Committee in their junior or senior year, depending on their professional plans.

Your advising, academic, and experiential work will prepare you for medical school and other health related graduate and professional program requirements as they continue to evolve.

Experiential Learning
Actively testing your prehealth goal is an essential part of the evolution and deepening of your interests. It is also essential for acceptance into medical school. Human Ecology students explore the field through a variety of experiences, including clinical internships, shadowing work, study away programs, field study, and volunteer positions to name a few. Meaningful involvement in these opportunities allows students to participate in and become part of communities.

Gaining clinical experience through an internship is one of the best ways to test your interest in medicine and the health professions. You can arrange an internship at a hospital, clinic, or physician’s office. Opportunities are posted in the Human Ecology Career Exploration Center, the college’s weekly electronic newsletter, or in the University Career Center.

Human Ecology’s Urban Semester in New York City is an off-campus program that offers outstanding experiential opportunities as well as three Human Ecology courses in urban affairs. Premed students participate in quality internships in numerous medical settings; complete a special premed seminar to discuss different medical modalities, including anesthesiology and obstetrics; and partake in community service in a school system. A summer program – The Culture of Medicine – is also available.

The Capital Semester in Albany, New York, combines Cornell courses with a paid internship. Students intern directly for New York State legislators and can explore interests in health care policy. Their experience in helping write legislation for mental health policy or women’s health initiatives, meeting with lobbyists and constituents, or working on legislative hearings is invaluable to understanding the business of health care. The Cornell in Washington program, in Washington D.C. is structured similarly, allowing students to examine health care policy at the national level.

Field experience also can provide opportunities to shadow physicians at work, conduct research, make presentations on public health issues, research and write grant proposals, observe surgery, attend rounds, or assist in clinical work. Human Ecology’s premed students have gained field experience in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Washington, D.C., at the Institute for Medicare Practice at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, in pediatric cardiology at the University of Rochester, at AGI Genetics, in behavioral pharmacology at the Schering-Plough Research Institute, and with the Ithaca Orthopedic Group.

Why Human Ecology?
The curriculum is designed so that students can take nearly two-thirds of their courses in the humanities and sciences while completing an interdisciplinary major in Human Ecology that addresses current issues in human health. Premed students in the College of Human Ecology benefit not only from a close-knit community of 1,250 undergraduates and 105 faculty members, but also from the vast resources of Cornell University.

PATCH (Pre-professional Association Toward Careers in Health) is a prominent, Human Ecology based student-run organization that serves students interested in health care from a human perspective. Guided by the college’s premed adviser, PATCH is open to the entire Cornell community and provides peer mentoring, support, and up-to-date information for students pursuing careers in medicine or health care. Programs include guest speakers on allopathic and alternative medicine, information on medical school admissions, MCAT preparation tips, research opportunities, internships, an annual trip to a medical school to meet admissions staff and current students, and community service projects.

Human Ecology students also gain valuable clinical experience on campus by participating in Cornell University Emergency Medical Service, the health center’s Helping Hands Gannett Volunteer Program, or Cornell Wellness internship programs. In the Ithaca community, students volunteer at Cayuga Medical Center, various assisted-living centers for senior citizens, AIDS Work of Tompkins County, Ithaca Breast Cancer Alliance, and other health-related organizations. On-campus student organizations include the Undergraduate Nutrition Organization, Black Biomedical and Technical Association, EARS (Empathy, Assistance, and Referral Service), and Student Health Alliance at Cornell.

College of Human Ecology Selected Medical School Acceptances
Recent Cornell graduates with a 3.4 grade point average or better had a 74 percent admittance rate to medical school. The university’s overall admittance rate for first-time applicants has been 27 percent higher than the national average.

- Albert Einstein College of Medicine
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Columbia University
- Duke University
- Harvard University
- Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- Stanford University
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Rochester
- Vanderbilt University
- Weill Cornell Medical College
- Yale University
Human Ecology Undergraduate Courses Related to Health Careers

**Design and Environmental Analysis**

- 1110 Making a Difference: By Design
- 1500 Introduction to Human-Environmental Relations
- 2500 The Environment and Social Behavior
- 3250 Human Factors: Ergonomics/Anthropometrics
- 4550 Research Methods in Human-Environment Relations

**Human Development**

- 1150 Human Development: Infancy and Childhood
- 1170 Human Development: Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood
- 2180 Human Development: Adulthood and Aging
- 2510 Social Gerontology: Aging and the Life Course (also SOC 2510)
- 2600 Introduction to Personality (also PSYCH 2750)
- 2610 The Development of Social Behavior
- 3440 Infant Behavior and Development
- 3470 Human Growth and Development: Biological and Behavioral Interactions
- 3620 Human Bonding
- 3660 Affective and Social Neuroscience
- 3700 Adult Psychopathology (also PSYCH 3250)
- 4180 Aging: Contemporary Issues
- 4190 Midlife Development
- 4660 Psychobiology of Temperament and Personality

**Nutritional Sciences (all courses are health related)**

- 1150 Nutrition, Health, and Society
- 1160 Personalized Concepts and Controversies
- 1200 Nutrition and Health: Issues, Outlooks, and Opportunities
- 2450 Social Science Perspectives on Food and Nutrition
- 2750 Human Biology and Evolution
- 3060 Nutritional Problems of Developing Nations
- 3150 Obesity and the Regulation of Body Weight (also PSYCH 3150)
- 3200 Introduction to Human Biochemistry
- 3410 Human Anatomy and Physiology
- 3500 Epidemiology in Context
- 4250 Nutrition Communications and Counseling
- 4410 Nutrition and Disease
- 4420 Implementation of Nutrition Care
- 4500 Public Health Nutrition

**Policy Analysis and Management**

- 2300 Introduction to Policy Analysis
- 2350 The U.S. Health Care System
- 3500 Contemporary Issues in Women's Health
- 3800 Human Sexuality
- 4370 Economics of Health Policy (also ECON 4370)
- 4380 Economics of Public Health (also ECON 4380)
- 4440 Violence against Women: Policy Implications and Global Perspectives (also FGSS 4480)
- 4460 Economics of Social Security
- 5520 Health Care Services: Consumer and Ethical Perspectives

**Fiber Science and Apparel Design**

- 3350 Fiber Science
- 4360 Fiber Chemistry
- 4390 Biomedical Materials and Devices for Human Body Repair
- 6640 Human Factors: Anthropometrics and Apparel

Course work in the Sloan Program in Health Administration is also available to undergraduates in the college. A sample of offerings follows:

- 5470 Microeconomics for Management and Policy
- 5520 Health Care Services: Consumer and Ethical Perspectives
- 5540 Legal Aspects of Health Care
- 5630 Health Care Financial Management II
- 5640 Health Care Resource Management and Quality Improvement
- 5670 Health Policy

For More Information
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