

CYTOLOGIST (CT)

What do I do?

A Cytologist prepares and evaluates human cellular samples from all body sites, under the direction of a pathologist, to detect precancerous changes, cancer, benign tumors, infectious agents, and inflammatory processes. They may also also prepare specimens, attend fine needle aspiration procedures at the bedside and, assist in quality assurance activities.

My typical day includes:

- **Microscopically evaluating** patient cell samples for evidence of infection or neoplasia.
- Collaborating with cytopathologists to determine **companion technologies** needed to provide quality patient care.
- **Performing Rapid On-Site-Evaluation (ROSE)** during patient biopsy procedures to ensure adequate tissue procurement for diagnostic and prognostic studies.
- Independently **evaluating cervicovaginal cytology specimens** to issue a final report for specimens showing no evidence of abnormality.
- **Selecting and marking appropriate cells of interest** in a cytologic sample to present to a pathologist for diagnostic interpretation.
- **Triaging cytologic specimens** for the appropriate companion diagnostic methodology on a case-by-case basis; including but not limited to immunohistochemistry, special stains, flow cytometry and molecular diagnostics.
- Developing **differential diagnosis** based on synthesis of appropriate case data during morphologic evaluation of small diagnostic samples and cell blocks samples.
- Maintaining proficiency in all aspects of the **preparation of cytology samples**.

Necessary Skill Sets



FLEXIBILITY

Ability to adjust to changes in test volume or workflow to meet patient care needs.



PROBLEM SOLVING

Ability to determine if instruments and stains are not performing properly and resolve issues.



ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Performs work with accuracy, ensuring results meet parameters for test quality. Able to assess differences in cellular morphology and impact on results.



CRITICAL THINKING

Understands normal and abnormal findings, performs additional testing when appropriate and knows when to escalate unusual results to a pathologist.

Education Requirements

A Bachelor's degree in Cytology[†] or related science from a accredited institution.

Note: For examination eligibility requirements, including alternate education/training routes, refer to the link provided under certification section.

[†]Cytology programs are in a transition period, moving to Master's level degrees.

Certification

[Earn certification as a Cytologist \(CT\) from the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification \(ASCP BOC\).](#)

Salary

Mean Annual Salary*: \$105,909 (Median \$100,422)

* Salaries are based on a national average and will vary by location, years of service and other factors. ([ASCP Data](#))