

Tips to Get the Most Out of a Job Shadow Experience

- Keep in mind that **job shadowing is a privilege**. While most health professionals enjoying hosting job shadows, they certainly do not have to allow students to come and shadow them. Many healthcare organizations do not permit job shadows until a student is in college or technical school. Having the opportunity to job shadow while still in high school is an even bigger privilege. Act professionally during the job shadow and be sure to show your enthusiasm and appreciation.
- Arrive early! It is recommended to arrive 15-20 minutes before your scheduled job shadow. Allow extra time to get there just in case you are faced with unforeseen circumstances (traffic, car troubles, poor weather, etc.). Many places will be unable to accommodate you if you are late. If you are unfamiliar with the facility, you may want to go there a couple of days before to figure out exactly how to get there and where to check in. If you are unable to make it for any reason (illness, car troubles, etc.), always call the site as far in advance as possible to let them know.
- Dress appropriately and professionally. Clothing should be neat, tidy and clean. Men should wear nice pants and a nice shirt. Women should wear dress pants or skirt/dress that is knee-length or longer (with nylons, tights, or socks to cover bare legs), and nice dress top.

Under **NO** circumstances should you wear: jeans, sweatpants, tank tops, sleeveless shirts or dresses, low cut shirts, shirts that expose the midriff or undergarments, tight or baggy clothing, shirts with writing on them, sandals, flip flops, dangly jewelry, hats, or excessive make-up. Tattoos should be covered, facial piercings should be removed, fingernails should be clean without nail polish, and perfume or cologne should be avoided. Gum is not allowed at any time during the job shadow.

It is a good rule of thumb to follow the dress code of the facility (although if you are shadowing someone who wears scrubs, don't wear scrubs unless you are told to do so). You don't want to stick out, so dress like the professionals and follow the dress code of the facility.

In addition to proper attire, good personal hygiene is a must. Be sure to shower, brush teeth, pull back hair (for people with long hair), wear deodorant, and avoid cologne or perfume (some people have sensitivities).

Comfortable shoes should be worn, because you may be on your feet for extended periods of time. Shoes should be closed-toed, and women should avoid wearing high heels.

- Ask questions! This is your chance to get to know what a day in the life of someone with that particular career is like. See the "Questions to Ask During a Job Shadow" page for sample questions. Always make sure your questions are appropriate and professional.
- Be respectful of the office and the staff. Follow all of the policies and guidelines of the site. Be polite, courteous, and enthusiastic. Try your best to not interrupt the workflow of the department.



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- Observe everything. In addition to observing the job tasks, observe your surroundings. Does this feel like a good fit for you? Were you working alone or with others? Was technology used? What were the interactions like between co-workers (did they talk to each other, leave notes, or did they communicate through email)? Were there any responsibilities that you didn't realize they had (such as documenting notes in a computer)?
- **DO NOT** take cell phones or other personal items into your job shadow. Keep these items in the car or at home.
- Always send a thank you card after your experience. Your mentor did not have to allow you to job shadow, but they chose to. Always thank them and let them know how much you appreciated the experience. You may even want to mention one or two things that will help to leave a good impression and hopefully they will continue to job shadow other students.
- Complete any required assignments for your school. It is also a good idea to take some time to think about your future career plans. Some things you may want to document area:
 - Department you visited
 - What types of activities did you observe?
 - What did you like the best?
 - What did you like the least?
 - Were you surprised about anything you experienced?
 - Would you consider a career in this area? Why or why not?

Remember: All patient information must remain confidential! When talking about your experience, be sure not to mention any names or any identifying patient information. You cannot tell your neighbor that you filled their prescription or your mom that her friend was in the hospital. At no time is it acceptable to discuss this type of information with anyone. Doing so is a HIPAA violation (breach of confidentiality) and there are severe consequences, including punishment under state and federal laws.

Please visit the [Scenic Rivers AHEC website](#) for more information.