

The top section of the page features a vibrant orange background filled with various medical icons in white and blue outlines. These icons include pills, capsules, a stethoscope, a microscope, a syringe, a pill bottle, a pill blister pack, and a plus sign. A dark blue, brush-stroke-like banner spans across the middle of the page, containing the main title.

Exploring Nursing Pathways

Nursing Career Guide

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* Click on this symbol throughout the document to learn more.

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WORK & LEARNING



Johnson & Johnson's Support of the Nursing Profession

For more than 125 years, Johnson & Johnson has been proud to champion and support the nursing profession. We continue that legacy today by working with partners to attract and strengthen an innovative, thriving and diverse nursing workforce, empowered to advance health equity and transform healthcare. As part of that commitment, we are proud to support this nursing navigation guide to inspire a new generation of students to consider nursing as an impactful, exciting, purpose-driven career. Visit nursing.jnj.com to learn more about nursing specialties, scholarships, and pathways into the profession, as well as how J&J supports the nursing profession overall.



Did you know that nurses account for most of the healthcare workforce?

More than 4 million nurses currently work in the U.S., and that number is projected to increase by 6 percent from 2021 to 2031. Nurses are the backbone of the healthcare system, and their contributions to patient care, health systems and health equity are essential.

Nurses provide hands-on patient care, conduct critical research, help improve access to care in places where it is limited, prescribe, and administer medications, provide support and education, coordinate services, and so much more. **Nurses have an important role in society as leaders, innovators, and patient advocates.** There are more than 100 specialties within the nursing profession. Nurses work in hospitals, clinics, schools, homes, outpatient medical practices and more, which allows nurses to choose a career path that is the most interesting and impactful to them. Nurses spend more time interacting with patients than any other health care professional, making it not surprisingly the most trusted profession in the United States for the last 21 years.





Have we piqued your interest?

GOOD!

This nursing career guide will help you determine what you can do in high school to prepare for a career in nursing, help you identify post-high school education options to become a nurse, explain the various types of nursing degrees that you can pursue, and provide you with a peek at the day-to-day responsibilities of a few nursing specialties.

Our goal is to provide you with an introduction to the nursing profession to help you decide if nursing is the right career for you!





Introduction



Why become a nurse?

A career in nursing is one of the most exciting and rewarding occupations out there. Nurses provide vital hands-on patient care, but that's not all they do. **They are also leaders, innovators, educators, change makers, data analysts, dot connectors, problem solvers, advocates, and so much more.**

Nurses are key members of healthcare teams working with physicians, specialists, social workers, and many others to provide quality, safe care for their patients. A career in nursing provides endless opportunities to learn and grow as healthcare is ever changing. As a nurse, you are there to make a difference and care for your patients at a time when they are sick and may feel most vulnerable, in the sad times, like when patients receive a heart-breaking diagnosis, as well as in the good times, like when a healthy baby is born.





Nursing Notes

CLICK ON  FOR MORE

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High School Education Preparation

High School Courses

These courses are not requirements for admission to nursing school, however, they can help you learn some of the basics before starting your post high school education or career. Your teachers, administrators, or school counselor can help you select the classes that will help you to meet your goals.

The recommended high school courses are broken down into three sections:



Math and Science



Elective



Career and Technical Education





SECTION 1

Math and Science

Algebra: In Algebra, you'll study transformations, equations, and solutions involving a variety of mathematical functions. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Geometry: The topics covered in geometry include coordinate and transformational geometry, proofs and congruence, trigonometry, two- and three-dimensional figures, circles, angles, and probability. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Statistics: Statistics classes will help you learn more about variability and statistical processes. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Physics: Physics is a hands-on branch of science focusing on nature and properties of matter and energy. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Biology: Biology is the study of life and the processes that sustain it. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Chemistry: In Chemistry, you will learn about the properties of matter, how energy changes during physical and chemical changes, atomic structure, the periodic table of elements, chemical equations, acids and bases, and solution properties. [READ MORE](#) ▶





SECTION 2

Elective

Economics: Economics teaches you how markets function, how economic principles affect your daily life, and how to make sound economic decisions. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Psychology: Psychology is a broad field of study that looks at how people act and helps you understand yourself and others better. [READ MORE](#) ▶

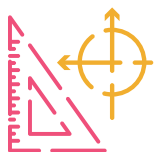
Child Development: Child development focuses on parenting as well as child growth and development. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Speech: Enrolling in Professional Communications (Speech) will help you hone your public speaking skills for use in both your personal and professional lives. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Nutrition: Global perspectives on nutrition, dietary needs, physiological processes, food labeling, healthy weight management, dietary-related diseases, food handling, and nutrition for different populations are just a few of the topics covered in nutrition courses. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Foreign Language: In foreign language classes, the focus is on helping you learn how to communicate in your chosen foreign language. [READ MORE](#) ▶





SECTION 3

Career and Technical Education

Health Science: This course will give you an overview of the healthcare industry's systems for treatment, diagnosis, health informatics, and support services, as well as the requirements you need to meet to continue your education and become a successful healthcare worker.

[READ MORE](#) ▶

Medical Terminology: This course will teach you about the structure of medical vocabulary, such as prefixes, suffixes, word roots, combining forms, single and plural forms, abbreviations and acronyms.

[READ MORE](#) ▶

Anatomy and Physiology: Anatomy and Physiology investigates how our bodies are built and how they work together. [READ MORE](#) ▶



High School Volunteer and Work Experiences

In addition to gaining the foundational skills taught in a traditional classroom environment, there are several opportunities available to you that will help you to boost your resume and become a more marketable applicant when applying to nursing programs or jobs. After exploring these opportunities, meet with a school counselor, community job center, or directly with a hospital/organization to learn more.



Volunteering

Volunteering at a hospital, long-care facility, or nursing home is a great way to get used to the atmosphere of a clinical setting and gain experience working with patients.

[READ MORE](#) ▶

Part-Time Job

Consider applying for a healthcare-related part-time job. Part-time jobs have flexible hours and can be a dependable source of extra income. [READ MORE](#) ▶

EMT or Paramedic

While still in high school, you can train to be an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or paramedic.

[READ MORE](#) ▶

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

Certified nursing assistant training can be completed in as little as four to eight weeks, even for high school students. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Join a Nursing Club

Consider joining a nursing club or a student health organization like HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America). [READ MORE](#) ▶



Getting Ahead with Certifications and Exams

There are several exams and certifications you are eligible to complete as a high school student that could give you a head start as a nursing student. Consider enrolling in certification programs outside of high school that connect directly to the nursing profession.



First Aid

Even though we take a number of safety measures in our daily lives, accidents resulting in injury can happen anywhere. [READ MORE](#) ▶

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

A first responder uses CPR — a mix of chest compressions and breathing — to deliver essential blood and oxygen flow to an unconscious person's heart and brain.

[READ MORE](#) ▶

Stop the Bleed

The STOP THE BLEED® course will teach you how to spot life-threatening bleeding and efficiently intervene.

[READ MORE](#) ▶

Pre-Nursing Exams

Some registered nursing programs require applicants to take the National League for Nursing Pre-Admission Examination. [READ MORE](#) ▶



3



Nursing Certificate and Degree Options

There are several educational pathways available in the nursing sector that could help get your nursing career started.



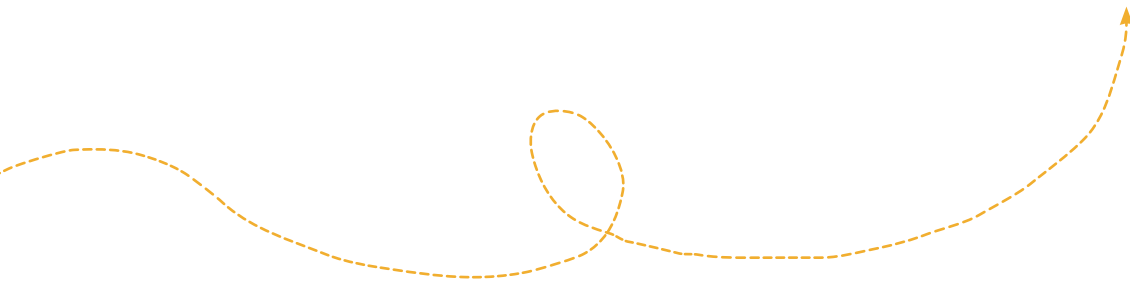
Some nursing options require short-term training, while others require an undergraduate or graduate nursing degree. While advanced master's and doctoral degrees can enable you to become a leader in the nursing sector, shorter-term certifications and diplomas can help you get your foot in the door to begin your journey in the field of nursing. After reviewing these resources, you will be able to understand the different types of nursing degrees and certificates, and determine which option may be right for you.

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- 26 [Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree \(DNP\)](#) ▶
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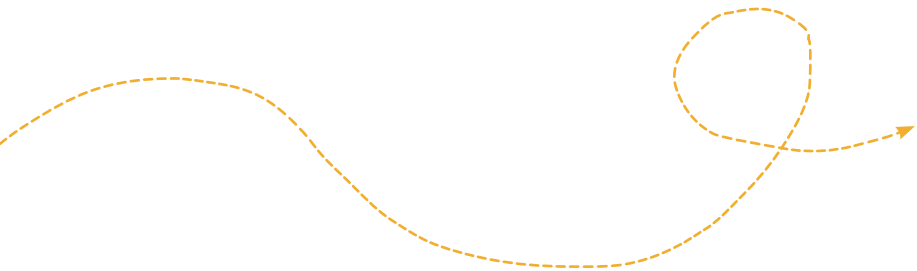
Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)

Certified medical assistants are clinical healthcare workers who support physicians, registered nurses, and others, who have completed training and met the requirements to earn certification. This process generally requires graduation from an accredited medical assistant program in addition to passing a certification exam. You can complete a medical assistant program through a community college, vocational school, technical school, or university. Depending on which program you choose, it can take anywhere from one to two years to finish, with some colleges offering programs that can lead to an associate degree. Though several different types of certifications exist for medical assistants, certified medical assistants generally refer specifically to those who have received the CMA certification from the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA). CMAs must be able to perform both clinical and administrative duties in a complex and potentially fast-paced environment. As a CMA, you must employ a unique blend of technical and human skills to support physicians, patients, and hospital staff as efficiently as possible.



Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

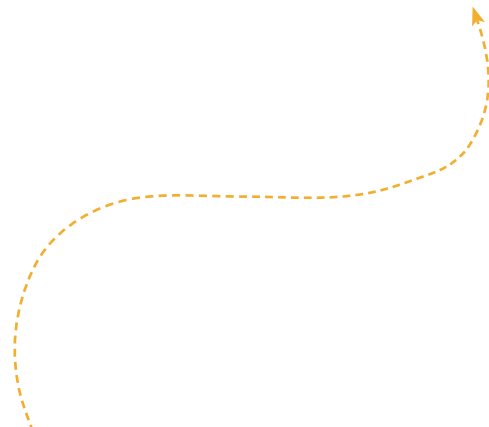
Under the direct supervision of a Registered Nurse (RN) or Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) assists patients with activities of daily living and other healthcare requirements. Depending on which state you live in, you might also hear the terms licensed nursing assistant (LNA), patient care assistant (PCA), and nurse's aide when describing a CNA. Some people will use their CNA experience as a bridge to advance in their careers and become LPNs or RNs. Interestingly, many CNAs are already enrolled in a nursing program and use this career as an opportunity to study more about the healthcare industry and acquire practical experience and knowledge. CNA programs are generally found at local community colleges, high school, vocational or technical schools, or local hospitals.



Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)

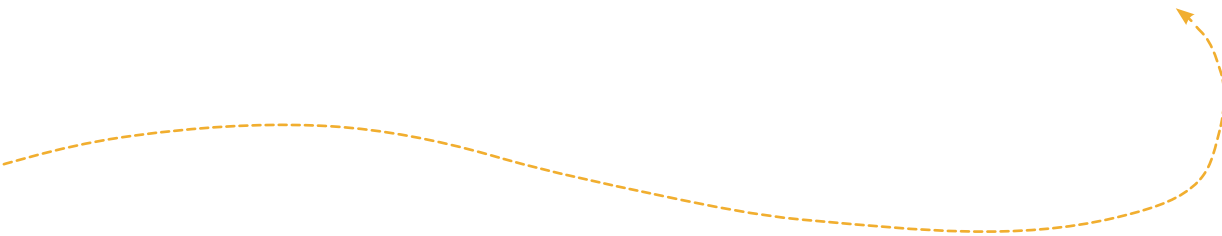
LPNs and LVNs are healthcare professionals that offer basic nursing care to patients under the supervision and guidance of healthcare providers and registered nurses.

The primary distinction is that in California and Texas, the term LVN is used; therefore, if you live in one of these states, you will need to look for LVN programs. Otherwise, both occupations require the same qualification and licensing process, pay the same, and have comparable responsibilities. To become one, you'll need to complete an LPN program that combines classroom education and hands-on patient care training. A LPN/LVN typically attends school for one to two years. Many community colleges and technical institutes offer LPN/LVN training programs. Once you graduate and become certified, you can provide basic nursing care like providing a comfortable environment, promoting safety, communicating with healthcare providers like physicians and nurse practitioners, administering medicine, and checking vital signs in various medical settings. LPN and LVN graduates need to pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN) and apply for their professional LPN/LVN certification.



Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)

In just two years, you can get an associate degree in nursing (ADN) and become a registered nurse (RN). RNs care for patients by evaluating and monitoring their health, collaborating with doctors during medical procedures, and administering treatments. In order to become an RN you must have obtained either an associate or bachelor degree in nursing. The demand for RNs is at an all-time high, and nursing pay reflects this need. Because of its value and flexibility, many nurses begin their careers with an ADN. Most ADN students attend public community college programs, making it excellent for career changers, those who need to start earning money as soon as possible, or those who are unsure whether they want to pursue a nursing profession. Once you graduate with your ADN, you must take the NCLEX-RN to apply for a state nursing license. The NCLEX-RN is a standardized multi-hour test covering nursing practice, including specific nursing skills, communication, and legal and ethical aspects of nursing. Only graduates of accredited programs are eligible to take the NCLEX-RN and become nurses.



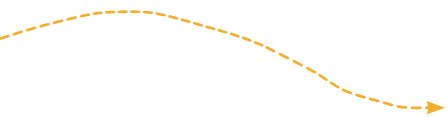
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)

When you have a BSN, you qualify for the widest range of positions in the nursing field. In addition to working in a clinical care environment, nurses with a BSN can also work in other sectors like insurance, pharmaceuticals, law, and public health. BSN programs typically take anywhere from two to four years to complete depending on previous education. During the completion of a BSN program, you will also become a RN after passing the NCLEX-RN and applying for a state nursing license. If you aspire to become an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) you must have a BSN as well as graduate studies in clinical nursing or nursing education.



Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

A Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree allows practicing nurses to move forward in their careers. MSN-prepared nurses may pursue advanced care specializations, as well as management or teaching positions. Advanced pharmacology, nursing research, and advanced health assessment are some of the most prevalent courses you can take in your MSN program. To earn your MSN, you need to graduate from a recognized nurse practitioner (NP) program, and you will be entitled to the designation of nurse practitioner in your specialty after completing the required coursework and passing your NP board exam and obtaining a state license. A traditional MSN degree usually takes two to three years to complete.



Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree (DNP)

A Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree is a terminal degree that provides advanced training for nurses who already have a BSN or a MSN. The DNP is a doctoral-level degree, but it is not the same as the certification required to become a medical doctor. Instead, this practice-focused degree enables you to acquire additional expertise and knowledge in the nursing profession. DNP specialties offer a way for nurses to narrow their focus to build the career they want. Your goals and interests can help you choose a DNP specialty that offers the education you need for your career. DNP nurses are in high demand for roles in nursing leadership centered on clinical applications and are seen as crucial participants in the future of health care in the U.S.

Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PHD)

Earning a PhD in nursing prepares graduates for work either in academia or research settings and to assume top leadership roles across healthcare settings.

Graduates often pursue faculty positions with academic institutions or in a career that involves performing research in a laboratory. PhD programs are approximately 60 credits, many of which are dedicated to your dissertation, an academic project in which you conduct original research on a particular topic of your interest (such as geriatric diabetes or childhood obesity). You might be wondering where you can apply your degree in the workforce. Some PhDs in nursing fields include research, education, industry/pharmaceuticals, policy development, and writing/publications. As some professionals may say there are endless possibilities once you have obtained this level of a degree.



4



Continuing Education Beyond High School



Exploring Post-High School Education Options in the U.S.

You can choose from a wide variety of colleges and universities that offer nursing programs. Please keep in mind, however, that there are several nursing careers that don't require a degree. Identifying your interests and career goals early on will help determine your educational journey. Explore the different options below to learn more about educational opportunities in your area.

5



Nursing Roles and Responsibilities

Nursing Roles and Responsibilities

Nurses have access to a wide range of exciting and impactful employment opportunities. In this chapter, you will find a comprehensive list of nursing careers and specialties to choose from to help you identify a nursing career that interests you the most. Additionally, you'll find the recommended degree requirements for each position, the median salary, and a summary of the day-to-day responsibilities associated with each nursing specialty.

Salaries and duties may vary depending on where you practice, what degrees and certifications you have, how long you've been practicing, and who you're working for.



Watch an introduction video by Kirsten Noles. ▶



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Patient Care Technician (PCT)

Patient care technicians (PCTs) play an important part in the healthcare system by working behind the scenes to increase a patients' quality of life. Patient care technicians tend to patients and provide daily care to ensure patients feel safe and cared for during their hospital stay. Patient care technicians can work in a wide range of healthcare facilities, from hospitals and clinics to nursing homes and home health agencies.



Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

A Certified Nursing Assistant can also be known as a licensed nursing assistant (LNA), patient care assistant (PCA), and nurse's aide depending on your location. Certified nursing assistants ensure their patients' well-being by performing several duties that aid with daily living activities. As a certified nursing assistant, it is your responsibility to understand your patient's behavior and health status as you will often spend more time with the patient than other nurses or doctors. You will play a vital role in the early discovery of symptoms, whether it be decreased mobility, increased pain, or memory challenges, and may identify issues that other healthcare workers might not be able to because of the time you can spend monitoring and connecting with your patients.

Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)

In order to become a certified medical assistant, you must earn an American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) certification as you will play an important role in the patient-centered healthcare team. As a medical assistant, you will provide support to other healthcare providers with patients requiring medical treatment outside of a hospital setting, such as medical offices and clinics. Medical assistants are crucial in helping patients feel comfortable in the physician's office and often are responsible for explaining the physician's orders.

Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)

An LPN, (or LVN in Texas and California) is a certified healthcare professional who assists registered nurses or physicians with a variety of responsibilities. As an LPN/LVN your responsibilities differ depending on the facilities in which you work and the states in which you are licensed. You may have basic clinical responsibilities or be assigned supervisory responsibilities depending on the setting. It is important that as an LPN/LVN, you choose an environment that will allow you to continue to learn and grow as a professional in order to prepare for a more specialized LPN/LVN role or to earn your registered nurse license if becoming an RN is part of your ultimate goal.

Registered Nurse (RN)

Registered nurses are essential members of healthcare teams. While many people connect RNs to hospital settings, the truth is that RNs work in a variety of medical environments. Depending on your specialty and hobbies, your career as an RN could take you outside of hospitals and into schools, corporate settings, or even into the skies as a flight nurse. You will have an impact on the lives of patients no matter where you work, but your responsibilities will differ based on your department and specialty. Beyond the basics, where you work could make a huge difference in your role. For example, RNs who work in physicians' offices also perform patient education and take on some administrative work, while RNs who work in the operating room might assist with surgical procedures, while those working in residential clinics might help with community outreach events.



[Learn more from Registered Nurse, Bre Loughlin. ▶](#)



[Learn more from Registered Nurse, Gemma O'Donnell. ▶](#)

Perioperative Nurse

Nurses who specialize in perioperative care assist patients before, during, and after surgical procedures. The terms scrub nurse, circulating nurse, surgical nurse, and operating room nurse are all used interchangeably when talking about a periop nurse. Working with surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nurse practitioners, perioperative nurses spend most of their time in the operating room collaborating with other medical professions and advocating for patients. The reassurance, steadiness, and order that the perioperative nurses provide is invaluable during the surgical process. Periop nurses work in several different environments including hospitals, out-patient centers, ambulatory surgery centers, and doctor's offices that provide surgical care.



[Learn more from Perioperative Nurse, Tess Stansell. ▶](#)

Oncology Nurse

Oncology nurses provide comprehensive care to patients who have been diagnosed with cancer. These nurses also help patients and their loved ones deal with the anxiety that comes along with the many uncertainties brought about by a cancer diagnosis, including the prospect of mortality. Some responsibilities include checking on your patients' progress during treatment, ensuring they are handling treatment well, and providing them with as much information as possible regarding their diagnosis.



[Learn more from Oncology Nurse, Cameron Cook. ▶](#)

Ambulatory Nurse

Ambulatory care nurses are RNs that work in outpatient healthcare. They provide medical attention to people who aren't experiencing medical emergencies in a walk-in clinic, urgent care center, doctor's office, or similar facility. In general, ambulatory care nurses are less likely to deal with life-threatening situations, and the workload is more stable and predictable. Routine care, injury care, and the treatment of chronic and acute illnesses are all tasks commonly performed by ambulatory care nurses. Nurses working in ambulatory care settings are expected to have a broad range of clinical expertise. Ambulatory care nurses collaborate with patients' primary care physicians or advanced practice nurses to deliver health education, diagnostic testing, and therapeutic interventions.



[Learn more from Ambulatory Nurse, Charlene Platon. ▶](#)

Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Nurse

Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurses are highly trained RNs working with patients with life-threatening illnesses or conditions. ICU nurses work in a complex and challenging field and require an advanced technical skill set, a calm manner, and an upbeat outlook. As an ICU nurse, you will provide life-saving care to patients who are incredibly sick and often fighting for their lives. Patients admitted to the ICU frequently undergo intubation, mechanical ventilation, and receive a combination of life-saving medications. ICU nurses are experts in providing comprehensive care to help patients recover as quickly as possible. Additionally, ICU nurses work with patients of all ages, from newborns to the elderly, and treat a wide variety of serious illnesses and traumas. ICU nurses work in many different environments, including hospitals, surgical departments, progressive care units, and outpatient surgery centers. Working as an ICU nurse is a challenging and rewarding career for those who genuinely want to make a difference in the lives of others.



Learn more from ICU Nurses, Jennifer DiBenedetto and Tresne McCarty. ►

Labor and Delivery (L&D) Nurse

Labor and delivery (L&D) nurses are there for their patients before, during, and after giving birth, and they also look after the newborn babies immediately following delivery. Labor and delivery nurses closely monitor their patients during every step of labor and birth, providing help when needed. Additionally, L&D nurses can administer medication, monitor vital signs, and educate patients, their parents, and families. Being a part of bringing a new life into the world is one of the greatest perks of working as an L&D nurse.



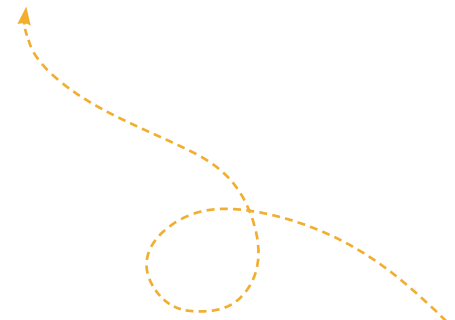
Pediatric Nurse

Pediatric nurses play an important role in caring for children ranging from newborns to young adults. As a pediatric nurse, you will advocate for children's health, inform children and their families about preventive care, and assist them in getting the necessary treatment. In addition to taking care of kids' injuries and illnesses, pediatric nurses help educate parents regarding their children's health.



Community Health Nurse

Community health nurses educate their communities about illness, disease prevention, safe health habits, and how to get health care. They help patients, families, and doctors communicate to improve health outcomes in frequently underserved, culturally diverse, and uninsured populations. Community health nurses are registered nurses who work in community settings, primarily with patients who have fewer options for medical treatment.



Mental Health Nurse

As a mental health nurse, you are responsible for providing care to individuals with mental or behavioral health issues at all stages of life. In this role, you will have the opportunity to form strong relationships with patients over time and help them to transform their lives in a positive way. In addition to the assessing, diagnosing, caring, and treating patients with mental health and substance use issues, mental health nurses also promote well-being through prevention and education. Hospitals, health systems, clinics, inpatient treatment facilities, independent psychiatric and psychological practices, as well as prisons and military bases, employ mental health nurses.

Pain Management Nurse

Many nurses pursue nursing specifically to help those in pain. Pain management nurses administer medications and provide other treatments for either acute or chronic pain. As a pain management nurse practitioner, you will work in close collaboration with the patient, family, and other healthcare professionals to find the most effective pain relief. Similar to most nursing professions, pain management nursing requires difficult ethical judgment calls and decisions.



Gastroenterology Nurse

Gastroenterology nurses assist patients with conditions affecting the gastrointestinal (GI) tract or the digestive system. There are gastroenterology nurses who focus on extremely particular GI conditions, including cancer, motility, and inflammatory bowel disease. Others might choose to focus on a single organ, like the pancreas or liver. When gastroenterology nurses work as a team, the effectiveness, efficiency, and compassion of GI health care are all improved.



Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) are a vital part of the health system of the U.S. APRNs are registered nurses that have earned their master's or doctoral degree in a specialized field. As an APRN, you are prepared to assess, diagnose, and manage patient problems, order tests, and prescribe medications. APRNs fall into four specific roles: Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, and Certified Nurse Midwife. APRNs can practice independently and in partnership with other members of the healthcare team to provide complex, life-sustaining care. Although APRNs have a lot of autonomy, it is likely you may need to collaborate with or be overseen by a doctor in certain states.

Nurse Practitioner (NP)

Nurse practitioners provide an essential layer of care in any modern healthcare system. As a nurse practitioner, you are directly responsible for improving the care that patients receive and sometimes for saving their lives. The most important factor to remember is that a nurse practitioner acts as a primary care provider for their patients, which means that in many states you can provide care to your patients without being directly overseen by a physician. Nurse practitioners have vastly more freedom and flexibility in their role than many other types of nurses, including registered nurses. As a nurse practitioner you have the opportunity to work in a variety of settings, including emergency rooms, hospitals, managed care facilities, surgical clinics, and private practice offices. In these settings, you will treat a wide range of patient problems depending on your specialized area of focus, such as acute care or psychiatry.



[Learn more from Nurse Practitioner, Abby Hess. ▶](#)

Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM)



A certified nurse-midwife provides a full range of primary health care services to women throughout their lifespan, including gynecologic care, family planning services, preconception care, prenatal and postpartum care, childbirth, and care of a newborn. As a certified nurse midwife, you play a significant role in the delivery of health care and are responsible for a variety of tasks. Certified nurse midwives are an excellent asset to any hospital or birthing facility and are qualified to serve as the sole provider during labor and delivery. As a certified nurse midwife, you could work in a variety of locations, including private offices, community and public health clinics, hospitals, birthing facilities, and homes.

Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)

As a clinical nurse specialist, you are responsible for diagnosis and treatment of health/illness states, disease management, health promotion, and prevention of illness and risk behaviors among individuals, families, groups, and communities. The variety of work you could do as a clinical nurse specialist is wide-ranging. Clinical nurse specialists provide patient care in a specialty area, including adult-gerontology, family practice, neonatal, pediatrics, psychiatric mental health, and women's health. As a clinical nurse specialist, you will collaborate with other nurses and medical staff, serving largely in leadership roles such as nurse educator, researcher, advisor, and policy advocate.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)

The Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist is equipped to offer the full range of anesthesia care and anesthesia-related services to patients of all ages. Patients include individuals whose health status may range from healthy to all levels of illness, including patients with immediate, severe, or life-threatening illnesses or injuries. As a certified registered nurse anesthetist, you will work with various medical practitioners, such as surgeons, dentists, and podiatrists, and act as a liaison between your patient and their health care provider.



* If you're interested in reading about how nurses are driving innovation in the anesthesia industry, follow this link.

https://app.newsomatic.net/2023/4/27/nurse-invents-video-game/?t=42003aee-7ba6-44a1-83ca-b21a4ac09f71&reading_level=E3

Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

A family nurse practitioner is an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) who offers patients of all ages, including infants, adolescents, adults, and older adults, a wide range of family-focused medical services. As a family nurse practitioner, you will work in a range of facilities, including hospitals, clinics, private practices, community health centers, and educational institutions. Family nurse practitioners have a wide range of practice options, from treating major illnesses to teaching patients how to prevent disease. In general, you will focus on preventive care, monitoring your patient's long-term health, and consulting with other healthcare providers (such as physicians and physician assistants) with any issues that might arise.



[Learn more from Family Nurse Practitioner, Julius Johnson. ▶](#)


Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP)

A women's health nurse practitioner is an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) who specializes in the comprehensive care of women throughout their lifespan. As a women's health nurse practitioner, you will focus on reproductive, obstetric, and gynecological health. Not only will you provide diagnostic care and treatment, but you will focus on preventive health maintenance as well. Since women's health nurse practitioners care for women throughout their lives, they have a broad spectrum of responsibilities.



Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP)

As an acute care nurse, you are highly skilled and experienced in managing complex medical illnesses, managing injuries, and caring for patients with immediate and serious medical demands resulting from a variety of events, such as unexpected illness, post-operative recovery, and injuries. You will have the choice of specializing in either Pediatric or Geriatric/Adult acute care. A career as an acute care nurse could involve working in an emergency department with patients who are seeking assistance or in an ambulatory care unit with patients who are recovering from major medical issues. You are responsible for both direct and indirect patient care duties as an acute care nurse.

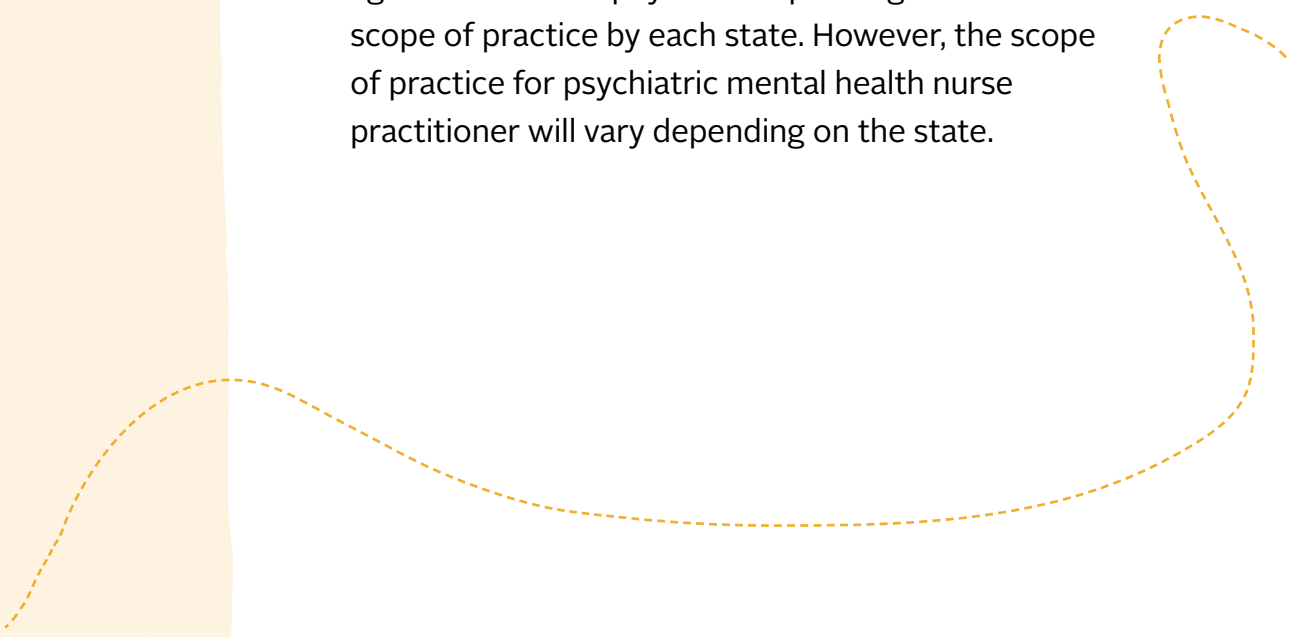


Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP)

Advanced practice nurses who work in emergency rooms or urgent care centers are known as emergency nurse practitioners. As an emergency nurse practitioner, you will work with attending physicians, nurses, physician assistants, and specialists in the emergency room to address common urgent medical concerns in patients of all ages. In addition, you will have a strong background in critical care, acute care, and chronic illnesses. You should also be able to function in a fast-paced setting while providing patient-centered care quickly.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)

As a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, you must be nationally board certified as well as licensed in the state where you work. Your education equips you to provide care for individuals with mental health issues at all stages of life. Nurse practitioners in psychiatry evaluate, identify, and address mental health issues. A psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner may be qualified to order and interpret diagnostic tests, manage treatment, and prescribe medications without a collaborative agreement with a physician depending on the scope of practice by each state. However, the scope of practice for psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner will vary depending on the state.



Nurse Educator

A nurse educator teaches nursing students in academic institutions and healthcare facilities. Nurse educators prepare nurses to practice at all levels, including students in their first year of nursing school all the way to experienced nurses seeking professional development. As a nurse educator, you are a leader who directs teams, provides guidance, and exemplifies best practices in nursing. You combine your clinical expertise and experience to serve as a guide and mentor to others. Nurse educators are experts in evidence-based practices and committed to continuous research, staying up to date on the latest ideas and developments in health care and nursing.



Learn more from Nurse Educator, Tinnikka Robertson-Jones. ▶

Nursing Administrator

Nurse administrators are responsible for leading overall nursing operations. In nursing management and administration, there are a variety of position titles, including director of nursing, chief nursing officer, clinical nurse leader, patient care director, and nursing directors of specific areas of expertise, such as critical care. Because nurse administrators manage staff and have high-level responsibilities, you must have extensive experience in nursing and impeccable leadership and management skills.



Learn more from Nursing Administrators, Denise Robertson, Chika Anueyiagu, and Ena Williams. ►

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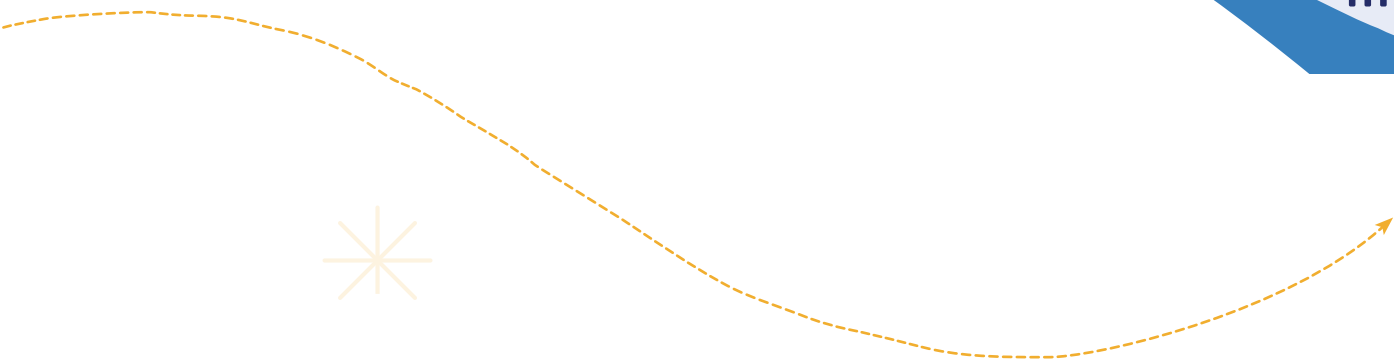
Unique Nursing Environments

Unique Nursing Environments

When you think of a nurse, you probably picture someone in a hospital or physician's office. But did you know that nurses can work in a variety of exciting and unique environments?

Check out the list of unique career opportunities that are available to you as an RN.







Nursing Connections with STEM

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) is all around us and has clear connections to all fields of nursing practice. If you are interested in showcasing the connections between STEM and nursing, consider experimenting with the 5 STEM activities listed in this section. These 5-to-10-minute do-it-yourself activities touch on a variety of scientific principles including biology, medical terminology, the circulatory system, cardiology, and pulmonology. If you are curious to learn more, keep exploring!



Banana Suturing

Activity Description

Observe your suturing ability by practicing a banana! Suturing is used to close wounds in the skin or other tissues. The goal of suturing a wound is to:




1. Minimize bleeding.
2. Reduce the risk of infection.
3. Close skin edges, allowing the wound to heal.
4. Protect & mend until the body's own healing process takes over.

Fact Facts

- Suturing needles are typically curved and made up of three sections:
 - Section A Point or tip of the needle, which is used to pierce the tissue.
 - Section B Body or middle of the needle, which provides stability and is grasped by the needle holder.
 - Section C Handle, which is where the suturing material attaches to the needle.
- Healthcare workers use forceps instead of their fingers to hold the needle with more precision while suturing.
- There are two main types of suturing materials:
 - Absorbable sutures that come from an organism whose your body can break down on its own.
 - Non-absorbable sutures that may be synthetic and require removal at a later date.
- The most popular tool for suturing treatments is the square suture knot. This is the simplest and most reliable knot, allowing the suture to hold tightly.

Materials

- Banana
- Thread
- Forceps, tweezers or needle nose pliers
- Needle (large or curved)
- Suture (silk or nylon)

BANANA SUTURES

Suturing is used to close wounds in the skin or other tissues and is an important surgical skill to learn. Sutures are commonly used because of their ability to keep the wound closed and clean for optimal healing. In this activity, you will practice suturing on a banana, so put on your surgical gloves and let's get started! ▶

Make Your Own Blood Model

Activity Description

In this activity, students will learn about the circulatory system by engaging the components of blood and creating a blood model. Our bodies require blood to survive. Blood transports oxygen and nutrients to all areas of the body, allowing them to function properly. Our blood is made up of four main components: plasma, red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets.

Fact Facts

- The main role of the circulatory system is to provide essential nutrients, oxygen, and hormones (chemical messengers) to various body parts. The circulatory system consists of arteries, capillaries, veins, and the heart, which serves as the origin, pump, and destination of blood.
- Each component of our blood serves an important purpose:
 - Red blood cells are used to transport oxygen from the lungs to tissues and are responsible for blood being red in color. Red blood cells make up 40-45% of blood volume.
 - White blood cells protect us against disease. White blood cells only account for approximately 1% of your blood.
 - Platelets help the blood clot and form scars. Platelets are not cells, but are smaller fragments of cells. Platelets make up less than 1% of blood volume.
 - Plasma is a yellow liquid that circulates dissolved chemicals and nutrients throughout the body. Plasma is a solution of 90% water, 7% proteins, and the remaining 3% is a combination of lipids, fats, and salts.
- The heart pumps blood to the lungs to get oxygen. The heart then sends the oxygenated blood through arteries to the rest of the body. The veins carry oxygen poor blood back to the heart. In short, the circulatory process over the circulatory system is critical to maintaining healthy organs, muscles, and tissues.

Materials

- 4 clear plastic bottles
- 1 cup of water
- Yellow food coloring
- Red food coloring
- 1/2 cup of hot, soapy water
- Salt
- Ziplock bag
- Elastic
- 60 Microneedles





MAKE YOUR OWN BLOOD MODEL

Blood transports oxygen and nutrients to all areas of the body, allowing them to function properly. Our blood is made up of four main components: plasma, red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. In this activity, you will learn about the circulatory system by analyzing the components of blood and creating a blood model. ▶

Modeling Your Spine

Activity Description




The human spine serves many purposes, including holding you upright! The spine is also part of your central nervous system, which controls every cell in your body. It is important to keep your spine healthy by exercising, using proper posture, eating when possible, and maintaining a healthy weight. This activity will walk you through creating a model of the human spine.

Fact Facts

- Spinal anatomy functions include the following:
 - Supporting our weight.
 - Protecting important cells in our brains.
 - Protecting our spinal cord and nerves.
- Healthy spine has the natural curves that combine to make an arch. These curves absorb shocks to your body and protect your spine from injury.
- Many different parts make up your spine:
 - Intervertebral discs: cushions or small bones form the spinal canal.
 - Facet joints: allow vertebrae to slide against each other providing flexibility and stability.
 - Intervertebral discs: sit between the vertebrae and act as the spine's shock absorbers.
 - The spinal cord: extending from the skull to the lower back, is a column of nerves that travels through the spinal canal.
 - Soft tissue in the back contains a network of muscles and ligaments that connect the vertebrae to hold the spine together.
- In addition to the 33 vertebrae that make up your spine, the average human spine has about 200 ligaments, 400 joints, and 60 muscles.

Materials

- Empty egg carton
- Pipe cleaners
- Colored foam beads (or construction paper)
- Marker
- Ribbon
- Straws
- Paper

MODELING YOUR SPINE

A key component of the central nervous system is the spine. The human spine serves a variety of purposes, the most obvious being that the spine is responsible for holding you upright. Every cell in your body is controlled by your central nervous system, so it's important to keep your spine healthy to avoid problems in the future. This activity will walk you through creating a model of the human spine. ▶

Get Your Heart Pumping

Activity Description




Your heart is a striking force responsible for pumping blood throughout your body. Having a healthy heart is crucial for living a long and healthy life. If disease or injury weakens your heart, your body's organs will not receive enough blood to function properly. In this activity, you will create a model that mimics your heart pumping blood to other organs.

Fact Facts

- Your heart pumps 2000 gallons of blood that travels about 10,000 miles through your body each day, which is roughly four times the distance of the U.S. from coast to coast.
- Every cell in your body gets blood from your heart, except for your cornea. The cornea receives its nourishment from the tears and aqueous humor in the front of the eye. The fact that the cornea doesn't get blood means it can't die with the rest of your body.
- Laughing is good for your heart! When you're laughing, 20% more blood can travel through your body because your blood vessels are relaxed and your heart doesn't have to work as hard.
- The heart has four chambers:
 - Two bottom chambers: the left and right ventricles, are responsible for pumping blood out of the heart. The ventricular septum is a wall that separates the two ventricles.
 - Two top chambers: the left and right atria, are responsible for receiving the blood. The wall separating the atria is the atrial septum.
- Your heart contracts your heart to the blood is pumped to your lungs and the rest of your body. A normal resting heart rate for adults is between 60-100 beats per minute.

Materials

- 1 Balloon
- 1 Clear jar or cup
- Red food coloring
- 1 Food-safe elastic band
- 1 Rubber band
- 1 Paper

GET YOUR HEART PUMPING

Your heart is the driving force responsible for pumping blood throughout your body. Having a healthy heart is crucial for living a long and healthy life! If disease or injury weakens your heart, your body's organs will not receive enough blood to function properly. In this activity, you will create a model that mimics your heart pumping blood to other organs. ▶

Take a Breath

Activity Description




Learning how your lungs work when you breathe is important, especially since breathing is key to surviving. We all breathe, and most of the time without even thinking about it. In this activity, you will create a working model of your lungs that demonstrates air going in and out of your lungs, similar to watching your chest expand and compress with every breath.

Fact Facts

- The human body's cells require oxygen for day after day. The respiratory system, which includes the lungs, allows the body to breathe by pulling in oxygen from the surrounding air and expelling carbon dioxide.
- The respiratory system is made up of the following parts:
 - Nose
 - Mouth
 - Throat (pharynx)
 - Lungs
 - Windpipe (trachea)
 - Diaphragm
- When you take a breath, your rib muscles pull your ribs up and outward while the diaphragm moves down toward the abdomen. When this happens, your chest cavity expands and forces air into the lungs through your mouth or nose.
- Did you know?
 - The lungs are the only organs in the human body that can float in water!
 - The average person breathes in 15 pints of air every minute.
 - In humans, the right lung is larger than the left lung to accommodate the heart.
 - If you hold out your lungs flat, they would cover the size of a tennis court (153 square feet!).

Materials

- 1 Clear, clear one liter bottle
- 3 Balloons (2 small, 1 large)
- 2 Straws
- 1 Sharp knife or modeling tool
- Play-doh or clay
- Straws or sticks
- 1 Rubber band
- Tape (mask tape or modeling tape)

TAKE A BREATH

Learning how your lungs work when you breathe is important, especially since breathing is key to survival! We all breathe, most of the time without even thinking about it. In this activity, you will create a working model of your lungs that demonstrates air going in and out of your lungs, similar to watching your chest expand and compress with every breath. ▶



Glossary of Terms and Resources

ACLS	Advanced Cardiac Life Support
ADN	Associate Degree in Nursing
AGNP	Adult Gerontology Nurse Practitioner
APRN	Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
BLS	Basic Life Support
BSN	Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree
BSN-to-DNP	Bachelor of Science in Nursing to Doctorate of Nursing Practice Bridge Program
CMA	Certified Medical Assistant
CNA	Certified Nursing Assistant
CNM	Certified Nurse Midwife
CNS	Clinical Nurse Specialist
CRNA	Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
DNP	Doctorate of Nursing Practice
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
ENP	Emergency Nurse Practitioner
FNP	Family Nurse Practitioner
GED	General Educational Development
GPA	Grade Point Average

GRE	Graduate Record Examination
Gerontology	Focus on the mental, physical, and social changes in the aging population
GI	Gastrointestinal
HOSA	Healthy Occupations Students of America
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
LVN	Licensed Vocational Nurse
MSN	Master of Science in Nursing degree
MSN-to-DNP	Master of Science in Nursing to Doctorate of Nursing Practice Bridge Program
NCLEX	National Council Licensure Examination
NCLEX-RN	National Council Licensure Examination Registered Nurse
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
NP	Nurse Practitioner
OBGYN	Obstetrics and Gynecology
Oncology	Focus on the study, treatment, diagnosis, and prevention of tumors
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PACU	Post-Anesthesia Care Unit
PCA	Patient Care Assistant
Pediatrics	Focus on treating infants, children, adolescents, and young adults

PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PMHNP	Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
RN	Registered Nurse
RN-to-BSN	Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Bridge Program
RN-to-MSN	Registered Nurse to Master of Science in Nursing Bridge Program
STEM²D	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Manufacturing, and Design
WHNP	Women's Health Nurse Practitioner

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