



Information on a Career in Nursing

Thank you for your interest in nursing! ANA hopes the following facts on nurses and the nursing career will be useful to you. Also see the back of this sheet for further sources of information.

What is Nursing?

Nursing has many definitions, but the essence of nursing is that nurses combine the art of caring with the science of health care. Nursing places its focus not only on a particular health problem, but on the whole patient and his or her response to treatment. Care of the patient and a firm base of scientific knowledge are indispensable elements.

What do Nurses do?

Nurses work in many different areas, but the common thread of nursing is the *nursing process* - the essential core of how a registered nurse delivers care.

This process involves 5 steps - *assessment*-collecting and analyzing physical, psychological and sociocultural data about a patient; *diagnosis*-making a judgment on the cause, condition and path of the illness; *planning*-creating a care plan which sets specific treatment goals; *implementation*-supervising or carrying out the actual treatment plan; *evaluation*-continuous assessment of the plan.

How to Prepare for a Career in Nursing

Nursing is a rewarding but highly technical field. Nurses must know not only the health sciences, but also how to plan, organize, and educate patients and their families. Students who wish to prepare for a nursing career should give particular attention to math, biology, and chemistry; computer science; and the behavioral and social sciences.

Nursing Education

Registered Nurses must graduate from an accredited school of nursing. Nursing education includes study in nursing theory and techniques, the science and treatment of disease, and several specialty areas. It also includes hands-on clinical practice in hospitals or other settings.

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) is a four-year university-based degree. It is strongly recommended as the base for the full range of nursing practice and responsibilities, in the widest number of settings.

The Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) is a two-year program which prepares individuals for a more defined range of practice settings and roles. It is usually offered through community colleges.

Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) have received further education, usually at the Master's level, in advanced roles, specialty areas or research.

Not all people enter nursing studies directly from high school. Today's students often enter nursing later in life, have degrees in other fields or are changing careers. Many can only attend college part-time. For this reason, many nursing schools offer joint degree or ladder programs, or credit for relevant experience. Flexible scheduling is also more common. Check with your

nursing school for exact requirements.

Licensing

Upon graduation, every nurse must pass a national examination to obtain a license to practice and use the title of R.N.; state Boards of Nursing administer these exams. Continuing education to maintain competency throughout the career is recommended, and required in some states.

Nursing Specialties

There is a wide variety of nursing specialty areas; you will certainly be able to find one to fit any interest you have. Examples include: surgery, emergency, pediatric, psychiatric, school, public health, nurse-midwives, and others. Note that some specialty areas require additional experience, study or certification.

Career Opportunities

There is a strong demand for nurses today. Career prospects are good, and job possibilities are plentiful. Nurses are needed not only in hospitals, but in home health agencies, long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, managed care centers, and in community health. Educating patients & their families in preventive care is highly important. Demands for advanced practice nurses are growing in many areas; some APNs are opening their own practices.

Nurses have never been more important to health care, and to their patients, than they are today. They must be well-educated, adaptable, and able to act as patient advocates. Nurses should be prepared for leadership roles in managing resources to promote better health care for their patients, whatever the location or setting.

Make a difference in someone's life. Be a nurse!



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The American Nurses Association represents the nation's entire registered nurse population of 2.6 million nurses; it is the strongest voice in nursing today. Unfortunately, ANA does not have the staff or resources to respond personally to the thousands of phone calls and letters we receive each month. We encourage you to do your own research, at your local library or on the Internet, to seek further information. The following sources will also be helpful.

Those who are seriously interested in becoming a nurse should contact the National Student Nurses Association. NSNA has more information on nursing as a career, applying to schools, nursing specialties, loans, and other things. Reach them at:

National Student Nurses Association, Inc.
45 Main Street, Suite 606, Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 210-0705
Web site: www.nсна.org (click on Career Center)

The Nursing Profession

For more information about nursing as a profession, what to expect in nursing school, nursing specialties, the need for nurses, and what it's like to be a nurse, read:

Majoring In Nursing
Janet R. Katz, RN
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, publishers

Or contact:

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing:
www.aacn.nche.edu/education.htm

The Department of Labor-Bureau of Labor Statistics:
<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos083.htm>

SigmaThetaTau Honor Society of Nursing:
www.nursingsociety.org/career

The Johnson & Johnson Company:
www.discovernursing.com

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Nursing Education

For information about specific undergraduate or graduate nursing programs, including locations, requirements, costs and financing, please refer to the following or similar books:

Peterson's Guide to Nursing Programs, (\$21.56)
Peterson's Guides, Inc.
(800) 338-3282

Order online at: www.Petersons.com

Financial Aid

For more information about financial aid for nursing school and scholarship opportunities:

Federal Student Aid Information Center
1-800-4FEDAID (433-3243)
www.fafsa.ed.gov

Your state departments of Education:
www.recruitingteachers.org/channels/clearinghouse/deptedu.asp

The financial aid office of your school or college.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing:
www.aacn.nche.edu/Education/financialaid.htm

Sigma Theta Tau:
www.nursingsociety.org/career/scholarships_opps.html

Johnson & Johnson:
www.discovernursing.com/scholarship_search.aspx