

Nursing Today

Nurses today represent men and women from all walks of life and are the largest health care profession in the United States. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, RNs are projected to create the second largest number of new jobs among all occupations, and expected to grow much faster than average for all occupations through 2014. About three out of five nursing jobs are in hospitals, but practice settings and specialty areas run the gamut of possibility. Nurses work in clinics, offices, schools, the military, health-related industries, and hospices, among others. They can work in any number of specialties, including as clinical nurse specialists, researchers, managers, in government, as travel nurses, nurse attorneys, perioperative nurses, critical care nurses and advanced nurse practitioners. The possibilities in nursing are unlimited.

What is Nursing?

Nursing is both an art and a science. It blends a scientific mind, technological know-how, a compassionate heart, and healing hands. RNs help sick people return to health and keep people healthy and prevent disease. Nurses are concerned with the physical aspect of health and illness, as well as with the psychological, social, and the spiritual dimensions of health and wellness. Nurses use a holistic (complete) approach to care for the entire individual's needs. As professionals who are responsible for coordinating patient care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nurses have a unique relationship with patients and must understand all aspects of their care.

What is nursing school like?

Nursing courses include classroom instruction and supervised clinical hands-on experience in health care settings. Students need good study habits and the ability to analyze and think through problems (critical thinking) to be successful in nursing school. At the end of the nursing program, graduates must pass the state board licensure examination to become licensed as a registered nurse.

What are the educational pathways to becoming a Registered Nurse?

RNs must first graduate from a nursing program to be eligible to take the nurse licensure examination. Students should apply to state approved and accredited schools of nursing. There are more than 1,500 nursing programs in the US. Three types of nursing programs prepare you to assume different roles once you graduate:

Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN): four-year program, offered at colleges and universities. There are also five-year work-study BSN programs. BSN graduates are prepared for leadership, management, and more independent nursing roles. Advancement opportunities are greatest for the BSN graduate. A BSN is required for entry into a master's degree in nursing program.

Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN): two-year programs (after pre-nursing courses are completed) offered at community and junior colleges. Some hospital schools of nursing, colleges and universities also offer ADN degrees.

Hospital Diploma: two or three-year nursing programs based in hospital settings. Many diploma schools are affiliated with junior colleges where students take basic sciences and English requirements. Both the ADN and hospital diploma programs pre-

pare graduates to deliver direct patient care in a variety of settings. With the high demand for nurses with bachelor's degrees in nursing, students who go to ADN and hospital based diploma programs are encouraged to continue their education soon after graduation. There are many RN to BSN and RN to MSN programs especially designed for nurses to advance their education.

ADN and hospital-based nursing schools are excellent entry-level programs for many students who do not have immediate access to a BSN program. To practice in advanced specialty areas, however, a master's degree is required. Many exciting fields of nursing require a master's degree, including nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, nurse-midwife, nurse anesthetist and RN first assistant in the operating room. A doctorate is usually needed to become a nurse researcher, professor of nursing, and high-level nurse administrator.

What is the salary potential of a new staff nurse?

Financial compensation for nurses varies according to geographic location, type of nursing, years of experience and level of education. Salaries and compensation for Registered Nurses are competitive. Regional differences are based on cost-of-living, demand for nurses, and the specialty. Check local classified ads and the internet for your area's RN salaries. Benefit packages often include health insurance, vacation, holiday pay, college tuition reimbursement, child care, flexible scheduling, and pension plans. Nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and nurses with advanced degrees make considerably higher salaries and may be eligible to receive direct payment from insurance companies for their services.

Licensure

After graduation from a state-approved nursing school, graduates need to pass a national licensing examination to become an RN. These examinations are offered through State Boards of Nursing. Some states also require continuing education to maintain a nursing license. When you make the decision to pursue a career in nursing, the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) can provide you with resources, scholarships and leadership opportunities.

How do I apply to nursing school?

Students interested in finding out more about nursing school should start by visiting www.nсна.org and clicking on the Career Center. This web site offers links to nursing schools on line. Nursing school requires a high school diploma and a sound academic standing in high school English, algebra, chemistry, biology, and psychology. An understanding of computers and technology is a great asset for future nurses. Leadership and organizational skills are equally important. You will do well in nursing if you can combine these skills and characteristics with a commitment to easing human suffering, and a capacity to respond quickly in emergency situations. Getting along with people and good communication skills are also important since RNs relate to people from all backgrounds. In addition to taking general pre-college aptitude tests, some nursing schools require a pre-admission test called the NLN Pre-Admission Exam as an indicator for success in nursing. The information resources at the end of this brochure will help you find out more about applying to nursing school.

Tuition

Tuition for nursing programs varies depending on whether you attend a public or private institution, and whether you are a resident or nonresident of the state where the program is located. Public schools are usually the least expensive.

Good questions to ask

When considering a nursing career, you should explore the following questions openly and honestly with your parents, the school nurse, guidance counselor, local hospital nurse recruiter, and a school of nursing admissions officer:

- What is it like to be an RN and what are the opportunities in nursing?
- Are there volunteer opportunities in a local hospital so that I can see what nurses do? Can I spend a day with an RN?
- What has been my level of achievement in junior high school and/or high school; will I meet the entrance requirements for nursing school?
- If I do not now meet the requirements, what can I do to meet them in the future?
- Will a part-time job be necessary during college?
- Will I be able to move to another location to attend school if necessary?
- What are my immediate goals (e.g., bedside nursing, critical care nursing, administration); and long-term nursing career goals (e.g., nurse practitioner, nurse researcher, college professor)?





When they complete nursing school, registered nurses (RNs) have specialized knowledge and many hours of practical experience that open doors for them in all kinds of practice settings. Once they pass the licensure examination, nurses are eligible to apply for thousands of exciting jobs.

Having a RN license is like having a passport to a guaranteed future—a future filled with rewarding experiences, unmatched opportunities, a competitive salary and excellent benefits.



Discover MORE about registered nursing!

The U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook provides an overview of the field of nursing including educational requirements, work settings, salary ranges and job outlook. Most public libraries carry it in their reference section or find it online at: www.stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos083.htm



Learn more about nursing careers, how to apply to nursing school, what it's like to be a student, scholarships, student loans, nursing specialties, and direct links to nursing schools online. Check out the National Student Nurses' Association at www.nсна.org (click on Career Center).

To find out about state-approved nursing schools, visit the National Council of State Boards of Nursing website at www.ncsbn.org

To learn more about accredited nursing programs, visit the National League for Nursing web site at www.nln.org and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing website at www.aacn.nche.edu

Discover more about nursing careers by visiting www.discovernursing.com

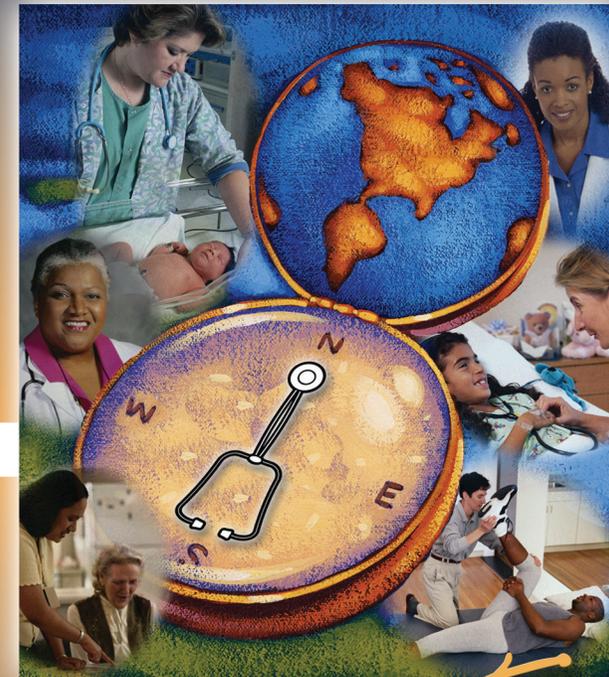
Write to the
National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.
45 Main Street · Suite 606
Brooklyn, NY 11201

or, for more information, you may contact NSNA by email at: nsna@nsna.org



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Nursing
It's Real. It's Life.



It's the... *Ultimate* Adventure!

Nursing is the career choice for men and women in the 21st Century. Career opportunities are boundless. Nurses can take their profession wherever they want to go. Here are just a few examples:



...An African-American nurse is a team leader on the Emergency Department team with doctors, technicians, and other nurses



...A Hispanic nurse manages a neighborhood clinic where local children go for their health care needs



...A nurse makes her rounds in a long-term care facility as a nurse specialist working with older people



...A young nurse assists with health care needs in a remote village



...An Asian-American nurse examines a heart attack victim in the cardiac care unit



... A nurse attorney presents closing arguments to a jury in a medical malpractice court case