



May 6-12, 2025 **National**

Thank you, nurses!

NURSES WEEK

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National Nurses Day, May 6

Day and night and through the extraordinary challenges of the pandemic, the tireless commitment and hard work of today's nurses have saved countless lives and provided comfort beyond measure to patients and families across our community and country. Please join us in thanking the dedicated nurses who make our hospitals and our world a better place!



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There are many ways to celebrate nurses

FAMILIES, PATIENTS AND COWORKERS CAN EASILY SHOW THEIR SUPPORT

Nurses are the heart of health care – steadfast in compassion, courage and commitment.

This Nurses Week, which is May 6-12, the American Organization of Nurse Leadership is one of numerous groups celebrating the enduring rhythm of nursing leadership.

“Care, Lead, Inspire – Repeat. It’s a cycle that defines the profession. Nurses care deeply – for patients, teams and communities,” the AONL says.

“They lead with integrity and vision, often in the most complex and challenging environments. They inspire others through action, advocacy and unwavering dedication,” they said. “And they do it all again – every shift, every day.”

Though nurses deserve to be celebrated throughout the year, National Nurses Week is an ideal time to do something extra for the nurse in your life.

Here are a few ideas for family, friends, patients and fellow nurses.

Support from family and friends

Offer a listening ear – Understand how best to celebrate your nurse hero by asking them how they’re doing.

Write encouraging notes – Send them off to work with an uplifting message (You’re amazing! You’ve got this! Have a great day!)

Take something off their plate – This could be as small as taking on extra chores around the house, picking them up from work, or walking the dog so they can rest.

Prep a special meal – Cook a homemade meal they can take to work or order their favorite food during their break.

Appreciation from patients

Write a thank you note – Show how much you appreciate your nurses with a handwritten card.

Give them a gift card – Whether it’s to a local restaurant or retail store, a gift card will encourage them to celebrate themselves.

Bring in a sweet treat – Pick up goodies from a bakery or coffee from a favorite local shop.



Though nurses deserve to be celebrated throughout the year, National Nurses Week is an ideal time to do something extra for the nurse in your life. There are a variety of ideas for family, friends, patients and even fellow nurses.

PEXELS.COM PHOTO Nurses Week

Gift them a DIY nurse survival kit – Nursing is hard. A survival kit can be both uplifting and useful. The best part is you can be creative in what you include, such as a water bottle, aspirin/Tylenol, compression socks or chocolate.

How nurses can celebrate each other

Be each other’s cheerleader – This can be as easy as writing a quick post-it-note and leaving it on someone’s desk or giving a shout out in a meeting.

Toast to one another – Plan a team happy hour or luncheon.

Be an ally – Connect with nurses new to the field to see how they are doing.

Some gift ideas

Tumbler – because you can never have too many reusable water bottles.

Snack/lunch container – many nurses bring their own food or snack to work and containers always come in handy.

Compression (or cozy, for after work) socks – help them show off their personality, while supporting them and their feet.

Writing materials – small notebooks, notepads, colored pens and highlighters will most likely come in handy, even if the digital age.

Stethoscope charm – containing any variety of positive messages and some companies offer personalization.

Most importantly . . .

If you are a nurse reading this, take a moment to celebrate yourself.

Make time for your hobbies – Take a moment to dance, run, bake, read, or do whatever you love.

Reflect on your impact – Take time to recognize everything you have accomplished.

Set goals – Think about what’s ahead and create a vision board for your future.

Take a walk – Spend some time in the sun and fresh air during your break.

Treat yourself – Order a meal from your favorite restaurant.

Engage in self-care – Do a face mask or take a restorative bath. If you really want to celebrate, schedule a spa day. You deserve it!

“This Nurses Week, we recognize the impact nurses have on all of our lives and acknowledge the dedication, hard work, and sacrifices made throughout their careers,” the team at CareRev said.

“To all the nurses, we cannot thank you enough. Enjoy National Nurses Week!”

What communities can do

The stress associated with the nursing profession has been well documented. A recent study published in the journal BMC Nursing found that job stress not only has an adverse effect on nurses’ health, but also may reduce performance and quality of care, potentially affecting the outcome of patients.

There’s no denying nurses have a lot of weight on their shoulders. That reality underscores the importance of letting nurses know how much they’re appreciated.

Community leaders can consider these ideas as they look for ways to honor local nurses.

• Recognize nurses at public events – Parades, high school sporting events, holiday tree lighting ceremonies, and other community-centric events draw large crowds. That makes these events the perfect time to honor local nurses and emphasize all the work they do to help their neighbors.

Ask a local nurse or two to serve as grand marshal(s) in a holiday parade and/or let local nurses flip the switch at a tree lighting ceremony. Community dignitaries like a mayor or local police chief can explain who the honoree is once the

crowd gathers.

• Support a nursing charity – A community-wide campaign to support a charity that benefits nurses or causes important to nurses can be a great way to thank them for all they do. Various organizations are linked to the nursing profession.

Prior to introducing a campaign, community leaders can speak with local nurses to see if there is any specific charity or cause important to them. Some charities may provide job training in communities where nursing shortages have made it hard for locals to access quality health care, while others may finance health care operations, including staffing of nurses, in underprivileged countries.

• Embrace public health efforts – One of the most effective ways to honor local nurses is to take a little off their professional plate.

Community leaders can urge residents to get their annual flu shots and update other vaccinations in an effort to keep hospital admissions low, which in turn makes nurses’ jobs easier.

Nurses are worthy of praise. Communities can do much to show these invaluable health care professionals how much their efforts and sacrifices are appreciated.

(METRO CREATIVE)

THANK YOU, NURSES!

2025 National Nurses Week

PUBLISHED BY
Southern Lakes Newspapers
1102 Ann St. • Delavan, WI 53115

EDITOR IN CHIEF:
Heather Ruenz

GENERAL MANAGER:
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ADVERTISING DIRECTOR:
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Hospice nurses are invaluable



They provide care during some of life's toughest moments

Coping with terminal illness can be challenging, even for those people with immense support systems behind them.

At some point in one's care plan, it may be recommended to transition from actively treating or trying to cure a condition to making the person more comfortable. This is when hospice steps in.

Generally speaking, hospice is reserved for people who expect to die from an illness within the next six months. Hospice care can take place in a health care setting or in a person's private home.

Hospice nurses are vital parts of a hospice care team. These people care for those who have opted for hospice at the ends of their lives and fulfill the hospice philosophy of comfort and quality based on each person's unique needs.

According to Samaritan Life-Enhancing Care, a hospice nurse serves many purposes. A hospice nurse discusses and explains the patient's prognosis and performs assessments and reviews medical histories. The nurse will administer medication for pain and monitor conditions

and additional needs.

Hospice nurses work to support the family and advocate for care according to the patient's wishes. They also can answer questions and address concerns, serving as sounding boards in difficult situations.

Additionally, hospice nurses provide emotional support and can facilitate spiritual support. Nurses are willing to be present at the time of death if asked. Hospice nurses can also play a role in helping coordinate counseling for surviving family members who are experiencing grief.

Hospice nurses may be classified as intake admissions, case managers, visit nurses, and triage nurses. One or more hospice nurses will be involved with patient care over the course of treatment.

Most hospice care providers are Certified Hospice and Palliative Nursing Assistants or Certified Hospice and Palliative Licensed Nurses. It is important for people considering hospice care nursing to determine the certification and coursework necessary for a career in the field. Families seeking hospice care needs should work with certified individuals.

It takes a compassionate person to work in hospice care. These invaluable individuals step in to offer assistance during trying times for individuals and their families.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Hospice nurses are vital parts of a palliative or hospice team. These people care for those who have opted for hospice at the ends of their lives and they fulfill the philosophy of comfort and quality of life based on each person's unique needs.

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The important role of nursing assistants

Health professionals are often unsung heroes. However, in recent years that has shifted due to the pandemic, which has led to millions of people gaining an understanding of the crucial role medical providers play in regard to helping patients and their families.

Nursing assistants are vitally important to the world of health care, and are often tireless workers who perform their tasks with professionalism and patience.

Certified nursing assistants, or CNAs, help patients with their basic daily care, and may assist with:

- Making beds and changing bedding;
- Helping patients use toilets and tending to catheters;
- Helping patients to get dressed;
- Monitoring vital signs and reporting on patients' health;
- Handling feeding and helping the patient drink; and
- Turning bedridden patients according to schedule.

CNAs work in various settings, notably long-term care facilities, doctors' offices, hospitals, and rehabilitation clinics.

Nursing assistants often are the first responders when a patient calls for help. They traditionally work under the guidance of registered nurses, and the work of CNAs frees up nurses to provide care that requires a greater level of training, such as administering IV medication or alerting doctors to significant changes in health.

Nursing assistants must possess certain qualities, as the job requires caregiving above all. The nursing resource All Nursing Schools says CNAs must be able to listen to patients' concerns and develop personal relationships.

The care CNAs provide requires a certain level of intimacy, and CNAs must have demeanors that help patients feel comfortable.

Some tasks may involve lifting or helping to move a patient, so some measure of physical strength also is needed.

Most importantly, CNAs often provide companionship and friendship, especially in home care settings. Providing comfort for patients who are scared, lonely or upset also is part of a CNA's job.

(METRO CREATIVE)



How to determine if nursing is right for you

Nursing is a popular career choice. With strong job security and the potential for growth, it is no wonder nursing draws such interest.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recently estimated there would be about 203,200 openings for registered nurses each year for the next decade. And employment of registered nurses is expected to grow by 6 percent in a 10-year period through 2031.

A strong job outlook and competitive pay appeals to any aspiring professional, but a career in nursing is about more than opportunity and compensation.

Individuals considering nursing need to determine if the field might be the right fit for them. It's not always glamorous being a nurse. In fact, it can be quite challenging and often stressful. However, the rewards tend to outshine the trials and tribulations.

The following are some components of nursing that can help individuals determine if the field is right for them.

Training time constraints

There are different levels of nursing, each of which requires a different amount of training and certification, according to Nurse Money Talk.

A certified nursing assistant must complete a program at a specific CNA vocational school, and such programs run between four and 10 months, on average.

Licensed vocational nurses can expect to study for 12 to 18 months and must pass the NCLEX-PN licensing exam.

Registered nurses will need two to four years of schooling and are expected to earn an associate degree or bachelor's degree. Aspiring RNs also will need a passing grade on the NCLEX-RN licensing exam.

Most nurses will have to complete clinicals to showcase skills in real life situations.

Flexibility

Nurses need to be adaptable and flexible. Shifts may not be consistent, and the demands of the job may differ from day to day, even though there may be some overlap.

If challenging new experiences come easy to you or if you have the flexibility to work different shifts rather than a set schedule, then nursing could be a good option.

Problem-solver and critical thinker

Although nurses are part of a larger health care team and may need to leave certain decisions to physicians, there are plenty of critical decisions and think-on-your-feet actions that may need to be taken to ensure patient health.

It is essential for nurses to keep their emotions in check so they can think clearly in stressful situations.

Good communicator

Nurses must be able to speak and interact with doctors and others in a clinical setting, but also communicate effectively with patients who may not fully understand all of the medical jargon nor what is happening to them.

Nursing requires social skills and an ability to pivot between many different roles – all the while adjusting communication tactics depending on the audience.

Organized and diligent

There isn't too much room for mistakes in health care, which means nurses will need to maintain their attention to detail; otherwise, they could subject patients to injury or even death.

In addition to these traits, good nurses should have compassion for patients. A desire to help others during difficult times compels many people to become a nurse.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Individuals considering nursing need to determine if the field is the right fit for them. It's certainly not always glamorous being a nurse. In fact, it can be quite challenging and stressful. However, the rewards tend to outshine the trials and tribulations.

WHAT IS NATIONAL NURSES WEEK?

Every year, from May 6 to 12, nurses are recognized for their service and dedication to caring for others and improving the health of patients nationwide through National Nurses Week.

Throughout the week, healthcare organizations celebrate their teams, and you'll even see nurses featured on the news. People across the nation thank the nurses who have made a difference in their lives.

Nurses Week celebrates the effort, dedication, and sacrifice nurses make every day. Nurses are essential members of America's healthcare workforce who provide care through every stage of life, working with patients at their most intimate and vulnerable moments. Nurses Week offers a chance to highlight and celebrate nurses for all they do.

National Nurses Week is just a part of the larger National Nurses Month, which is celebrated from May 1 to 31.

The American Nurses Association and other nursing organizations promote Nurses Week as a time to thank and recognize nurses across the country for their dedication to the profession and patients we serve.

Healthcare organizations throw celebrations, and the public is encouraged to "thank a nurse" who's made a difference in their lives.

"Nurses Week is our time to shine. Let's lift each other up and recognize the good in what we do every day. It's easy to dwell on everything that needs to be changed, but for one week, I challenge you to look for the good. Recognize your nurse besties, mentors, and the nurses who make a difference in your day," an article on nurse.org says.



National Nurses Week, May 6-12, is recognized by many organizations. National Nurses Day, which is May 6, was declared in 1982 and 12 years later, the celebration to Nurses Week became permanent.

NURSES.ORG PHOTO Nurses Week

Every healthcare organization celebrates its nurses a bit differently. Many hold events throughout the week to recognize their nurses, and meals or gifts for the entire nursing team are common.

Managers and administration plan and prepare for months to make the week special.

In the community, you'll see news reports highlighting extraordinary nurses who go above and beyond for their communities and patients.

"Many local businesses also create special offers for nurses – watch your local news and social media outlets to see what might be available near you," the site says.

A brief history

Several individuals, organizations, and political leaders contributed to the efforts that have evolved into Nurses Week as it is celebrated today. The American Nurses Association has compiled several facts about the history of Nurses Week:

1953: The first effort to establish a recognition day for nurses was when Dorothy Parker of the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare sent a proclamation to then-President Eisenhower. He never signed the proclamation.

1954: A National Nurse Week was observed October 11-16 in recognition of the 100th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's work during the Crimean War.

From the 1950s to 1970s, several bills were introduced to Congress, but none made it through the legislative process.

1974: The International Council of Nurses declared May 12 International Nurses Day. In the US, President Nixon signed a proclamation recognizing National Nurse Week.

1982: The ANA declared May 6 as National Nurses Day, which Ronald Reagan signed as an official proclamation

1990: The ANA extended the celebration to "Nurses Week," and the dates May 6-12 became permanent as of 1994.

Within Nurses Week, National Student Nurse Day is May 8, and National School Nurse Day is celebrated on the Wednesday that falls during Nurses Week.

Nursing has always been a profession that needs more than just your time and knowledge. Nursing requires heart, passion, and dedication to serving others.

Nurses Week allows the public to acknowledge and thank nurses for the work they choose every day.

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Fun ideas to honor your nursing team

Are you looking for a fun way to celebrate National Nurses Week? Here are some fun ideas that will make your team feel truly special and appreciated.

From their tireless dedication to their compassionate care, nurses play a vital role in keeping our communities healthy and safe. And there is no better way to celebrate them than with meaningful activities during Nurses Week.

A recent study by NSI found that the average hospital has turned over 100.5% of its staff within the last five years.

This industry-wide challenge is not without its costs. Studies show that the average cost of replacing a mid-level nurse amounts to as much as 150% of their annual salary. The expenses incurred from recruiting, interviewing, and training new hires can add up quickly, burdening employers with significant turnover costs.

Nurses Week presents a valuable opportunity for employers to address this by expressing gratitude for their nursing staff's hard work, sacrifices, and resiliency. After all, recognition is one of the most effective ways to combat turnover. In fact, studies show that recognized employees are nearly 6x times more likely to stay at their organization and 53% of employees say they would stay longer at their company if they felt more appreciation from their boss.

The week provides employers with a great opportunity to go above and beyond in recognizing the unwavering commitment and hard work of nursing professions. Every day, nurses selflessly care for patients (and their families), often going the extra mile to provide them with the compassion and dedication they need.

This designated week serves as a great reminder for employers, and even colleagues, to express their gratitude and appreciation for their hard-working nurses. Fortunately, there are a variety of ways you can celebrate Nurses Week and say 'thank you' to your team in a meaningful way.

- Organize activities or events – Plan a series of activities or events throughout the week to bring nurses together in a spirit of camaraderie and appreciation.

- Celebrate with awards or certificates – Honor your nurses by celebrating their achievements and contributions with a memorable keepsake.

- Say thank you with meaningful notes and gifts – Arrange for the staff, patients, and nurses' families to provide a personalized notes and add a gift to give



From bringing your nurses a treat or hosting a fun game to organizing a volunteer outing in the community (such as an animal shelter) you'll be recognizing them and strengthening the team.

PEXELS.COM PHOTOS Nurses Week

the week a personal touch.

Engage leadership, management, colleagues, and nurses' families in the festivities to make the celebrations more impactful. Often, these personal touches are what make celebrations truly memorable and meaningful.

Celebrating your nurses

- 1. Host an Olympics** – Who doesn't love a little friendly competition? Organize an "Olympics" with nursing-themed games and challenges, such as bed-making relays, IV pole obstacle courses, or medical trivia contests. Offer prizes or awards for winners to add to the competitive spirit.

- 2. Create a gratitude wall** – Set up a space where patients and colleagues can write notes of appreciation for nurses to read throughout the week. Make sure it's in a prominent location where it can be easily accessed and viewed by the nurses.

- 3. Cater lunch** – Food always brings people together, so organize a special meal to show appreciation for nurses' hard work. You can show your gratitude to your team by catering a lunch for the staff or organizing volunteers to bring in a nice meal.

- 4. Organize handwritten letters from peers** – Encourage colleagues to write handwritten letters expressing gratitude and appreciation for their fellow nurses' dedication and hard work leading up to Nurses Week. To increase participation, provide stationery, envelopes, and postage stamps for nurses to easily write and send their letters.

- 5. Create a video montage** – Compile video messages from patients, colleagues, and community members expressing their gratitude and appreciation for nurses' dedication and care.

- 6. Arrange free workshops** – Empower nurses to advance their skills and knowledge with professional development opportunities such as continuing education sessions, workshops, and seminars. These opportunities support nurses' career growth and advancement and show that you are invested in their career and future.

- 7. Host a talent show** – Want to lighten the mood during Nurses Week?

Organize a talent show! Your nursing staff can showcase their hidden talents, strengthening their bonds and uplifting the atmosphere. At the end of the talent show, have everyone vote on their favorite – or top three – performances and award the winners with a nice gift.

- 8. Pass out gift cards** – Show appreciation for nurses' hard work and dedication by distributing gift cards or vouchers for shopping, dining, or entertainment. You can use a digital recognition program that allows your nurses to select a gift card of choice within an allotted budget range. A gift card allows them to treat themselves to something special or get a gift that they will actually enjoy and use.

- 9. Create personalized gift baskets** – Put together gift baskets filled with goodies tailored to each nurse's interests

and preferences. Customize each gift basket with individualized touches such as handwritten notes, personalized labels, or decorative accents.

- 10. Implement a peer recognition program** – There's no better time to launch a peer recognition program than during a big celebration. Announce and launch a formal recognition program during Nurses Week to foster and regularly acknowledge nurses' achievements and milestones. If it's through a digital platform, kick off the program by awarding your staff with a meaningful message and gift.

- 11. Create superlatives for the nurses** – Want a fun way to celebrate your nurses in a way that also incorporates them? Organize superlatives for your nursing team! Ask your nurse team for their thoughts on meaningful and relevant superlative categories that suit your team well.

Categories could include "Most Compassionate Caregiver," "Team Player of the Year," or "Innovator of Excellence," celebrating the diverse talents and strengths within the nursing team.

A week or two prior, send a survey to the nursing team and have them nominate a colleague for each category. You can then announce them during Nurses Week!

- 12. Coordinate a volunteer day** – Give back to the community by organizing a volunteer day where nurses can participate in service projects together. Collaborate with a local nonprofit organization or community service group to identify a meaningful volunteer opportunity aligned with your nurses' interests and skills.

To boost participation, organize the logistical arrangements, such as transportation, scheduling, and necessary supplies, to make it easy for employees to join.

- 13. Host an awards ceremony** – Recognize your outstanding nurses with fun and meaningful awards. You can host an awards ceremony to celebrate your nurses or each announce the award recipients in your company's intranet.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



Teaching the next generation of nurses

A LOOK AT WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME AN INSTRUCTOR

By Amanda Gamboa
CONTRIBUTOR

Nurse instructors are registered nurses (RNs) who teach nursing curriculum and clinical skills. Also known as nursing educators, these RNs have several years of bedside nursing experience and education beyond a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). They are faculty of collegiate nursing programs as well as teaching hospitals. Nurse instructors are also employed in hospitals to provide ongoing training to other professionals.

In a 10-year period ending in 2032, the job outlook for nurse instructors is expected to increase by 6%. It takes four to six years to become an instructor, and the average salary is more than \$80,000.

What they do

Nursing instructors are responsible for preparing their students to safely care for patients. Successfully doing so requires professional nursing experience, additional training in teaching, and the ability to manage multiple responsibilities. Some daily tasks of nurse instructors include:

- Preparing lesson plans as part of a curriculum
- Lecturing in person or online
- Teaching and monitoring student nurses during clinical hours
- Demonstrating nursing skills to students
- Hosting office hours to meet with students individually
- Evaluating and coaching students
- Developing curriculum as part of a team
- Maintaining continuing education requirements

Some nurse instructors also choose to continue practicing at the bedside while teaching. Nursing instructors who only work with students during their clinical experiences are often part-time faculty employees. Full-time faculty members often supervise clinical experiences and teach classes.

Most nursing instructors teach subjects that reflect the nursing specialty they worked in as a bedside nurse. For example, experienced pediatric nurses would teach pediatric nursing classes and clinical experiences. Nurse instructors with years of patient care experience are often able to provide tangible examples of nursing care that make their teaching even more impactful.

Clinical nurse instructors are responsible for four to 10 student nurses on a unit at a time. The students build independence after shadowing other RNs, but the clinical instructor always gives medications with the students and checks their communication and charting. Nurse instructors may also teach and demonstrate clinical skills in a lab setting, where students use mannequins and medical teaching devices.

The title of nurse instructor is also used in hospitals to refer to a staff member who oversees continuing education, provides instruction on new devices, orients new staff, and serves as an ongoing resource for bedside RNs. Each specialty in a hospital may have their own nurse instructor. Nursing instructors in hospitals and other institutions are often part of their unit's leadership team.

How much does it pay?

Nurse instructors reported a median annual wage of \$80,780, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Median refers to the



Experienced registered nurses capable of teaching others will always be needed. In addition to educating the next generation of nurses, instructors can also pursue careers in writing textbooks or educational materials, managing and creating curricula, and developing and teaching continuing education with major organizations.

PEXELS.COM PHOTO Nurses Week

middle; half of nurse instructors make more than this, and half make less.

Most nurse instructors are employed at colleges, universities, or other professional schools. These nursing instructors reported an annual mean wage of \$86,900.

The highest-paying sector for nurse instructors was reported as medical and surgical hospitals, where they earned an annual mean wage of \$106,620. Nurse instructors note that pay varies by experience and location.

Where they work

Most nursing instructors work within nursing programs at colleges and universities. As these nurse instructors commonly have a combination role of lecturer and bedside nursing instructor, they lecture classroom hours with nursing shifts, sometimes 12 hours long with students.

Nurse instructors also hold office hours, grade students' work, and meet other faculty requirements. While many of these commitments are scheduled during business hours, work tasks may extend to the evening and weekends.

They are employed by hospitals are often part of the unit's management team and work closely with leaders to align education goals with regulatory requirements. Generally, their tasks can be completed within business hours. Nurse instructors may also work four days a week in ten-hour shifts.

As part of the management team, nurse instructors are often required to take rotating on-call hours to assist staff as needed with questions or to help with bedside care. Nurse instructors are expected to maintain their own bedside nursing skills as well as to be ready to help as needed.

How to become one

The first step to becoming a nurse instructor is to attend nursing school and

earn RN certification. Options for nursing programs include associate and bachelor's degrees, though a Bachelor of Science in Nursing is becoming the industry standard and will be required to teach.

During nursing school, a student nurse interested in teaching would do well to connect with teachers and learn more about their roles and pathways to teaching. Faculty members may also provide future recommendation letters and professional connections as well.

After completing a nursing program, student nurses are eligible to take the NCLEX-RN exam. After passing, they must then apply to the state board of nursing where they wish to practice. Application requirements include a federal background check and a fee.

RNs then gain experience at the bedside caring for patients. Those who want to teach may earn optional certifications in their specialty. These certifications demonstrate their knowledge and commitment to education and increase the strength of their employment or advanced training applications.

Most nurse instructors have a master's or doctoral degree obtained either prior to or during their employment as an instructor. Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) programs can be completed full or part-time and take as little as 18 months or up to two years or more.

Nurse instructors may also pursue a Doctor of Nursing Practice. DNP programs are 18 months to four years, depending on part-time or full-time student status. They may instead pursue a Doctor of Nursing Philosophy, commonly known as a PhD in Nursing. This is best suited for RNs in education and research. MSN, DNP, and PhD programs offer different tracks, or specialties, that students select prior to admission. A nurse instructor may choose a curriculum focused on nursing education or in the

specialty they wish to continue working in and teaching.

Certification as a nurse instructor is not required by employers but demonstrates a standardized level of knowledge and may make candidates more competitive.

Current options offered by the National League for Nursing are the Certification for Nurse Educators and the Academic Clinical Nurse Educator Certification. Eligibility for examination is based on a combination of education and experience.

Benefits of being a nurse instructor

As the demand for bedside nursing continues to grow, the demand for nursing instructors will also grow. Experienced RNs capable of teaching others will always be needed. RNs interested in becoming nursing instructors also have the opportunity to pursue the highest levels of education in nursing.

In addition to educating the next generation of nurses, nurse instructors can also pursue careers in writing textbooks or educational materials, managing and creating curricula for other nurse instructors, and developing and teaching continuing education with major organizations.

Nursing instructors are able to continue working with patients directly or indirectly while also advancing their careers, mentoring students, and growing the profession of nursing.

For more information, visit nursingeducation.org.

Amanda Gamboa has been caring for patients and creating content for over a decade. Her nursing experience has primarily been in critical care float pools and emergency departments. She's an RN, BSN and also holds a Bachelor of Health Science and a Graduate Certificate in Public Health. This article appeared on the Nursing Education website.

The roles and requirements of ICU nurses

Few people want to imagine being in an intensive care unit. Patients in an ICU are acutely unwell and require critical medical care, much of which is administered by talented medical professionals known as ICU nurses.

Nursing is a challenging and rewarding profession that features people performing a range of services. Anyone who has been in an ICU or visited a loved one in an ICU may understand the stress that nurses working in such wards are under.

Recognition of the work ICU nurses do can be a great way to show these invaluable professionals how much their contributions are valued and appreciated.

What is an ICU nurse?

The online nursing resource Nurse.org notes that ICU nurses are highly trained registered nurses (RNs) who work with patients confronting life-threatening illnesses or conditions.

Care provided by ICU is often lifesaving, as patients within these wards are often intubated, ventilated and taking various medications with a goal of saving their lives.

What is the ICU-nurse-to-patient ratio?

Various sources indicate that, prior to the pandemic, the ideal ICU-nurse-to-patient ratio was 1:1. However, the sharp uptick in ICU patients during the pandemic forced many systems to shift their approach, and ICU nurses routinely were asked to treat multiple patients.

That reality underscores just how heroic the efforts of ICU nurses during the pandemic were, but many within the industry fear that the ideal ratio of 1:1 could be left behind now that hospitalizations are generally down.

Experienced ICU nurses urge a return to the 1:1 ratio, noting that abandoning it could ultimately lead to a shortage in the field as nurses suffer from exhaustion and the trauma of juggling so many critical patients at once.

Individuals who want to express their appreciation for ICU nurses can support efforts to ensure the ratio of 1:1 is reestablished at their local health care



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facilities.

What tasks do ICU nurses perform?

Nurse.org notes that the responsibilities of an ICU nurse vary depending on the system within which a nurse works.

So, responsibilities can vary from hospital to hospital. However, they indicate that ICU nurses generally are tasked with the following responsibilities.

- Collaborate with health care professions to provide holistic care to patients.
- Educate patients and their families on diagnosis, medications, and other

information

- Clean and bandage patient wounds
- Monitor life support equipment
- Immediately respond to changes in the patient's condition
- Evaluate vital signs
- Administer medications
- Advocate for patients
- Provide comfort and prevent suffering
- Infuse blood products and monitor patient reactions
- Care for the patient's body immediately after death
- Identify patients' needs according to their age and level of consciousness and

subsequently create a care plan to meet those needs

- Complete paperwork prior to transferring or discharging a patient
- Respond to medical emergencies on the unit
- Support a compassionate and therapeutic environment for critically ill patients

ICU nurses are highly trained and talented individuals. Though being an ICU nurse is challenging, it's an option anyone thinking of becoming a nurse should consider.

(METRO CREATIVE)

FUN IDEAS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

14. Feature a guest speaker – Invite a motivational speaker, healthcare leader, or inspirational figure to share insights, stories, and words of encouragement with nurses to inspire and uplift them. Collaborate with leaders to identify topics or themes that would be most impactful and relevant for the guest speaker to address.

15. Take a group photo – Nurses Week provides a great photo opportunity. Your marketing team can share your Nurses Week celebrations on social media with a picture of the matching t-shirts to cultivate a strong brand presence and showcase your strong organizational culture. And the photo can be shared with the nursing team.

16. Offer wellness resources – With burnout and turnover on the rise, it's essential you invest in your nurses' wellbeing to proactively combat and prevent these issues. Provide access to a range of wellness resources tailored to nurses' needs, including counseling services, gym memberships, stress management workshops, and mindfulness

apps.

These resources support nurses' mental and emotional well-being, equipping them with tools and strategies to navigate the challenges of their demanding profession and maintain overall wellness.

17. Get flowers or plants delivered – Brighten nurses' days by arranging for flowers or plants to be delivered to their workstations or homes during Nurses Week. Whether it's a vibrant bouquet or a thoughtful arrangement, these floral gestures convey appreciation and gratitude for nurses' tireless dedication and compassionate care.

18. Invest in an employee concierge provider – Consider partnering with an employee concierge service to provide personalized assistance and support to your nurses. These services can help with tasks like scheduling appointments, running errands, or arranging travel plans, allowing nurses to focus on their work and maintain a better work-life balance.

19. Highlight your team on social media – Partner with your company's social media team to spotlight individual



PEXELS.COM PHOTO Nurses Week

nurses or share stories of their impact and dedication throughout Nurses Week.

Of course, make sure to get permission from the nurses before posting about them across your organization's social media accounts and consider working with them to get copy for the social media post.

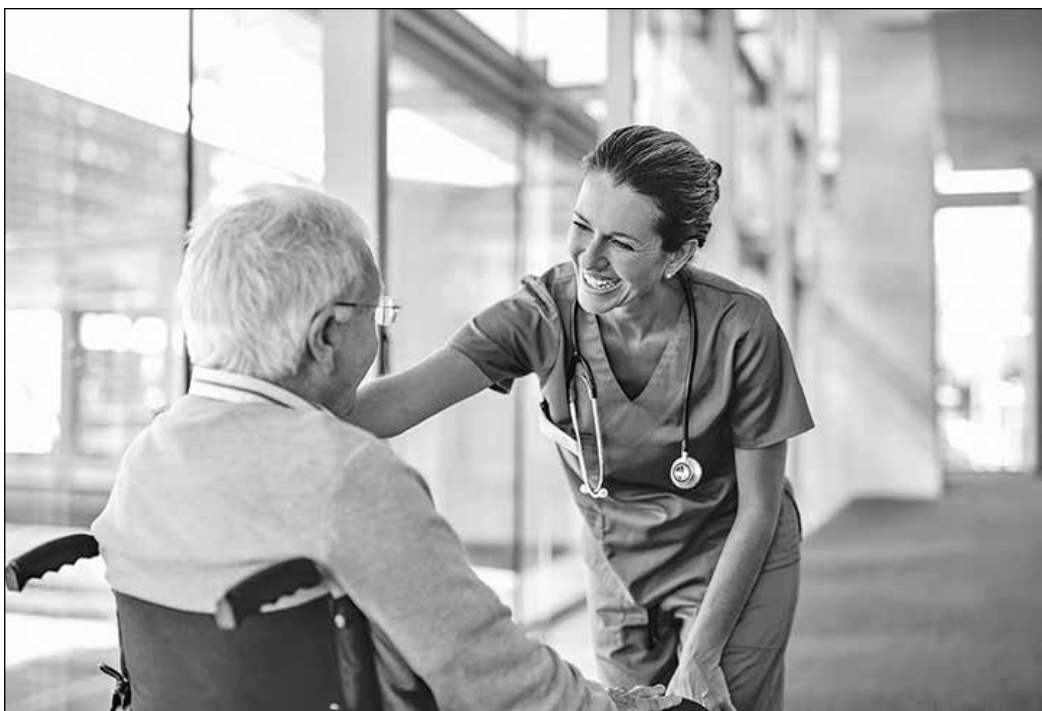
20. Surprise them with a treat – Make Nurses Week special for your team by

surprising your nurses with a new coffee station or providing snacks and sweet treats for your team to enjoy in the break room throughout the week. This is a small yet effective way you can show your appreciation for your nurses and make the week feel extra special.

This article first appeared on Inspirus.com.

Nurse practitioners can diagnose patients, prescribe medications, and in some states, open a private practice. A career as an NP consistently ranked highly among job satisfaction lists – and in increasingly high demand as the fastest-growing segment of the health care workforce.

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Nurses Week



Going from a registered nurse to nurse practitioner

NPs are in high demand, can choose their specialty

If you are already a registered nurse (RN), becoming a nurse practitioner (NP) means greater autonomy, specialization, and leadership in the workplace. Broadly speaking, NPs can diagnose patients, prescribe medications, and in some states, open a private practice.

Given these advantages, a career as an NP is rewarding – consistently ranked highly among job satisfaction lists – and in increasingly high demand as the fastest-growing segment of the health care workforce.

The difference between RN and NP

Both RNs and NPs are crucial to providing quality patient care, and because all NPs must also be RNs, there is often career overlap. However, their day-to-day scope of practice differs.

Nurse practitioners have a graduate-level education – either a master's or doctoral degree in nursing. This makes them advanced practice registered nurses, an umbrella term that also applies to registered nurse anesthetists, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse midwives.

Because of their additional education, NPs generally have more responsibility than RNs as primary or acute caregivers for their patients.

Unlike RNs, NPs can diagnose patients, create treatment plans, and, in many states, have prescriptive authority without physician oversight. Additionally, in states where NPs have full practice authority, NPs can establish private practices. (In states where NPs have reduced or restricted practice, they must work in collaboration with a supervising physician.)

Education for NPs

The pipeline to becoming a nurse practitioner includes education and training that prepares the NP to deliver

care with clinical excellence. NPs must first obtain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, typically during their four-year undergraduate studies.

Registered nurses who have an associate degree in nursing can also get their BSN through a two-year RN-to-BSN program. These programs are often online to accommodate the fluctuating schedules of most registered nurses.

Once an RN has their BSN, prospective NPs must complete a focused graduate master's or doctoral nursing program. All states require that NPs hold a Master of Science in Nursing; now, most entry-level NP positions may also require a Doctor of Nursing Practice. (This is different from the Doctor of Philosophy [Ph.D.], which prepares nurses for a career in research or academia rather than practice.)

MSN programs usually take between 18 months and three years to complete, though the specific timeline will depend on educational experience. For example, a nurse with a bachelor's degree in nursing could complete an MSN program in two years with full-time coursework.

There is also an option for a direct-entry MSN, for individuals with a non-nursing bachelor's degree to earn their BSN and MSN at the same time. These programs take two to three years.

Similarly, the overall length of a DNP program will depend on the applicant's background. For example, it might take a registered nurse with an MSN one or two years full-time, to four or more years if part-time, to obtain their DNP.

It is possible to pursue a BSN-to-DNP degree, though many programs list at least one year of full-time nursing experience as a requirement (so working as a registered nurse prior to pursuing an advanced degree may be desirable). These programs often take three to four years to complete.

Specialties NPs can choose

Unlike RNs, nurse practitioners choose their specialty prior to, or during, the course of their education. Start by reviewing the specialties on a prospective school's website, since not all programs offer the same trainings.

Once NPs-to-be finish their core coursework, they undertake specialty courses and clinic hours pertaining to their population or vertical focus. These will prepare them to be licensed as one of the following: Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner, Women's Health Nurse Practitioner, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Neonatal Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

For most of these licenses, nurse practitioners decide whether to work in acute or primary care situations. For example, a nurse practitioner who specializes in care across the adult lifespan might be either an Adult-Gerontology Acute Care NP or Adult-Gerontology Primary Care NP.

Throughout their career, NPs will have the option to switch or expand their scope of specialties, typically by attending a program like a one-year post-master's certificate program.

National Board certification for NPs

Once a prospective NP has obtained their degree, they'll need to get certified in order to practice. Such certification is mandated by most state boards of nursing, and available through a governing board that issues tests for program graduates, like the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Select states do not require this exam for NPs who completed a program approved by their state board. However, most insurances still require the credentials for third-party reimbursement.

For more information, visit nursingworld.org.

What is an NP?

Annual wellness visits have long been considered a vital component of preventive health care. That hasn't changed, though the dynamic between patient and health care professional during those visits has changed considerably for many people.

Once a realm exclusive to patients and their physicians, annual wellness exams now often involve patients and nurse practitioners. In fact, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners notes that NPs have become the preferred health partner of choice for millions of people, which makes it worthwhile to explore just what NPs do.

According to the AANP, NPs are highly educated clinicians who blend clinical experience in diagnosing and treating health conditions with an added emphasis on disease prevention and health management.

All NPs must complete a master's or doctoral degree program and have advanced clinical training beyond their initial professional registered nurse preparation. The education and training required of NPs prepares them to practice in various health care settings, including primary care, acute care and long-term care.

Some people may not even realize that the NP they speak with during an annual wellness exam isn't a physician. That's because NPs can perform a host of services people often associate with physicians. The U.S. National Library of Medicine notes that NPs are allowed to provide a broad range of services, including:

- Perform a physical exam
- Order laboratory tests and procedures
- Diagnose, treat and manage diseases
- Prescribe medications and write prescriptions
- Coordinate referrals
- Provide information regarding preventive care and healthy lifestyles
- Perform certain medical procedures

NPs undergo rigorous certification, periodic peer review and clinical outcome evaluations, and adhere to ethical codes. In addition, due to the fluid nature of health care, NPs must self-direct their continued learning and development to ensure they maintain their clinical competency.

The AANP notes that NPs help to address a shortage of primary care physicians. With their expertise and accepted range of responsibilities, NPs are helping to ensure patients receive timely and accurate medical advice. Without NPs, patients may have to wait especially long periods of time to see their physicians, which could have dramatic and adverse long-term effects on their overall health.

Nurse practitioners play a vital role in modern health care settings. These versatile, talented professionals routinely apply their rigorous training and extensive education in ways that benefit their patients every day.

(METRO CREATIVE)



A look at career paths of surgical nursing

Surgical nursing is a challenging and rewarding career path that requires specific education, certification, and practical training.

To become a surgical nurse, also known as an operating room nurse, you will need to follow specific educational, certification, and practical training steps.

As you work toward becoming a surgical nurse, you will have a lot of responsibilities that cover everything related to surgery. You'll be in charge of various tasks before, during, and after surgical procedures.

Before surgery, you'll have the task of preparing the operating room. This involves sterilizing the surgical equipment, setting up the necessary tools, and ensuring that everything is in place for the procedure. You'll also arrange surgical instruments on the table in the order of use to streamline the surgery workflow.

Further, you'll take charge of admitting and prepping the patient. You'll inform the patient about the procedure to alleviate any apprehension. It's your responsibility to gather all relevant information needed for successful anesthesia induction, such as diet, medication, allergies, and any health conditions.

During the operation, you'll assist in the procedure itself, potentially in the capacity of a scrub nurse, circulating nurse, or RN first assistant.

As a scrub nurse, you'll hand off sterile instruments and supplies to the surgeon during the operation. On the other hand, as a circulating nurse, you'll manage the overall nursing care in the operation suite and help maintain a safe and comfortable environment. As an RNFA, you'll perform more hands-on duties such as suturing and wound management.

Once the surgery has been performed, your responsibilities shift to the recovery and monitoring of the patient. You'll take care of wound dressings, monitor vital signs, administer medication, and ensure pain management. Moreover, assessing the patient's recovery and providing specific home-care instructions falls directly within your duties.

Understanding and demonstrating these roles and responsibilities is crucial for any nurse aspiring to work in the field of surgical nursing. The nature of surgical nursing requires high levels of competency, dexterity, and precision.

Types of surgical nursing specializations

There are several different areas of surgical nursing that you could choose to specialize in, each with its own unique aspects and challenges.

Orthopedic Surgical Nursing work with patients who are undergoing surgery related to the musculoskeletal system. This could include surgeries for broken bones, joint replacements, or spinal surgeries. You'd be responsible for preoperative care, assisting during the operation, and overseeing postoperative recovery. It requires a comprehensive understanding of the human musculoskeletal system, and a skill set that includes wound care and pain management.

Cardiac surgical nurses work with patients who are undergoing heart-related surgeries, such as bypass surgeries, angioplasties, or heart transplants. Your duties would be similar to those of an orthopedic surgical nurse but with a focus on the cardiovascular system. It requires a strong knowledge of the human cardiovascular system and related diseases.



To become a surgical nurse, also known as an operating room nurse, you will need to follow specific educational, certification, and practical training steps. As you work toward becoming a surgical nurse, you will have a lot of responsibilities that cover everything related to surgery.

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These nurses often work in fast-paced, high-stress environments where attention to detail and quick decisions are necessary.

Neurosurgical nurses work with patients who require surgery on their brain or spinal cord. These could range from tumor removal to treatment for neurological conditions like Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis. Neurosurgeries can often be complex and lengthy, requiring the nurse to have specialized knowledge of the human nervous system. In this role, managing patients' comfort before, during, and after surgery can pose unique challenges, given the sensitive nature of the nervous system.

Each of these specializations requires its own additional training and certifications beyond the basic nursing education and licensure. As a surgical nurse, you could choose to specialize further, become a scrub nurse, or move into a first assistant role. You could also branch out into nurse anesthesia or pursue a career in nursing education or administration.

Challenges and rewards

Choosing a career in surgical nursing brings its own unique set of challenges and rewards. Comfort with fast-paced work environments and the ability to handle stressful situations is crucial.

The operating room is a high-stress environment, and you will need stamina not only for the physical demands but also for the emotional toll that critical patient situations may cause.

Working for long hours, often standing, and assisting in complex medical procedures, as well as the need to swiftly handle high-stress scenarios, are all part of the job.

Surgical nursing can be physically demanding. You may face long shifts, potentially 12 hours or more, which can leave you feeling physically exhausted. Your responsibilities may include heavy lifting, such as turning or moving patients, and precise manual dexterity is often needed for handling surgical tools. It's crucial for you to maintain good physical health. Practicing regular exercise and having a balanced diet can help to manage the physical strain.

The mental demands of surgical nursing can be challenging. The pressure in an operating room can be intense and requires a high level of concentration and precision. Decisions that impact patients' lives are made in a matter of seconds.

You may also have to cope with difficult circumstances, such as unsuccessful surgeries or complicated patient situations. Strong mental health strategies and support networks are essential to deal with these

pressures and maintain mental well-being.

Despite these challenges, the rewards of a career in surgical nursing can be immensely fulfilling. Assisting in life-saving surgeries and contributing to patient recovery brings with it a high level of job satisfaction. You are in a position to make a significant difference in patient outcomes and their overall healthcare journey.

Making a successful surgery possible and witnessing patients' progress can give you a sense of accomplishment that few other professions provide. Being a surgical nurse also offers continuous learning opportunities. Each surgery is different, and working with different surgeons and anesthetic teams may allow you to constantly expand your skill set and knowledge.

Your ability to overcome the significant challenges that come with the role may also result in a high sense of professional growth and personal satisfaction, making surgical nursing a rewarding and satisfying career choice.

Continuing education, development

In the fast-paced and ever-evolving field of surgical nursing, continuing education is an essential aspect of maintaining competency and enhancing your knowledge base. The surgical environment constantly sees advancements in technologies, techniques, and patient care protocols. To provide the highest level of care, you need to stay informed about these developments.

Any changes in surgical procedures, equipment, patient management strategies, and safety measures are usually addressed through continuing education programs. These programs provide comprehensive training on current best practices, updates on new findings from the latest research, and introduce new technology being used in the surgical setting.

By participating in these opportunities, you're not only broadening your understanding but also elevating your performance, thus ensuring you continue delivering safe and effective care to your patients.

Parallel to continuing education is the concept of professional development. As a surgical nurse, you're required to exhibit high levels of expertise, critical thinking, and decision-making skills.

Professional development programs, through various career-enhancement initiatives, aid in improving these skills, thereby boosting your capabilities in conducting preoperative assessments, intraoperative procedures, and postoperative care more efficiently.

One vital aspect of professional development is attaining certifications specific to your practice. A certification like the Certified Perioperative Nurse is a clear testament to your dedication and commitment to your profession and patient care. It differentiates you as a nurse who possesses the advanced skills required in the complex surgical nursing field.

Often, maintaining these professional certifications requires you to accrue a certain number of continuing education hours, further underscoring the interconnectedness of education and development.

As a surgical nurse, your patients rely on you to protect and advocate for them during their operation. By prioritizing your ongoing education and professional growth, you can earn their trust, improve patient outcomes, and demonstrate your dedication to your profession.

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- Lisa Jensen, Vice President of Nursing Services/Chief Nursing Officer



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