

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

↑ CAREER LAUNCHER

Nurse Practitioner



“I do many of the things doctors used to do, like screening for health problems, treating common infections, and keeping patients healthy. Nurse practitioners allow the doctors to assist patients with major health problems.”



- **Education needed:** Master's degree as a nurse practitioner
- **Salary range:** \$70,000 – \$90,000 annually
- **Related jobs:** Emergency medical technician, nurse clinical specialist, nurse midwife, physician

➤ What I do every day

I'm a registered nurse who completed advanced education to become a nurse practitioner. I have my own license to practice medicine, and I'm qualified to work independently of doctors. I perform routine physical and gynecological exams, screen for health problems, treat common infections and chronic diseases, and provide health counseling. I also offer contraceptive care, pregnancy testing, and prenatal care. When patients with complex health problems require complicated treatment or surgery, I refer them to a specialist or surgeon.

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➤ The best part of my job

I focus on keeping patients well, so I spend a lot of time counseling and educating my patients on ways to stay healthy. This part of my job is extremely rewarding.

➤ The worst part of my job

Even though the nurse practitioner field is growing, some patients don't think I'm qualified to treat their medical problems and don't give me the same respect they give to physicians.

Nurse Practitioner

➤ What I need to know and be able to do

Nurse practitioners obtain health histories, order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic studies, diagnose health problems, develop and implement treatment plans, and counsel patients on ways to prevent health problems. They must know anatomy and physiology, chemistry, and nutrition. They should be keen problem solvers who like to work with physicians and other health care professionals.

➤ How I prepared to be a nurse practitioner

Earning my bachelor's degree in nursing was the first step toward becoming a nurse practitioner. After working as a registered nurse in the pediatric unit of a community hospital for eight years, I enrolled in a two-year master's degree program to become a nurse practitioner.

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When I finished, I took a national exam to become certified and licensed. To keep up-to-date with the latest developments in health care, I take continuing education courses each year.

➤ How I could have prepared better

When I became a nurse practitioner, I didn't think I'd spend so much time trying to convince insurance companies to pay for patient care. I'm not very good at negotiating, but to get patients the treatment they need, I must be persuasive.

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Math
Skill Check

► Skill Check 1

The amount of medicine you prescribe for patients is based on their weight. For example, the usual single children's dose of Keflex[®], an oral antibiotic, is 25 to 50 milligrams for every kilogram of weight. Determine the maximum dose of Keflex[®] for each child below.

David 26 kilograms

Akila 40 kilograms

Maya 45 kilograms

Nikki 80 kilograms

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Math
Skill Check

► Skill Check 2

Augmentin® is an oral antibiotic you often prescribe for children with ear infections. The usual daily dose for children is 40 milligrams for each kilogram of weight, given in divided doses every eight hours in a 24-hour day. For example, a child weighing 12 kg would be given 160 mg of Augmentin® every eight hours, for a total of 480 mg per day.

If you were treating a child who weighs 30 kg, what would the Augmentin® dose be for a 24-hour day?

Answer: _____

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Science
Skill Check

► Skill Check 1

As a nurse practitioner, you know that when a person breaks, or fractures, a bone, this is not usually life threatening. However, a large amount of blood can be lost with some fractures. Losing a lot of blood can be dangerous.

The following chart gives an estimate of the amount of blood lost with certain fractures. Read the chart and then answer the questions that follow.

Blood Loss			
Fracture	Liters	Fracture	Liters
Humerus	1.0–2.0	Tibia	0.5–1.5
Hip	1.5–2.5	Femur	1.0–2.0
Ankle	0.5–1.5	Forearm	0.5–1.0
Elbow	0.5–1.5	Pelvis	1.5–4.5
Knee	1.0–1.5		

Which fracture is more severe?

1. tibia fracture or hip fracture: _____

2. pelvic fracture or humerus fracture: _____

3. femur fracture or elbow fracture: _____

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► Skill Check 2

You sometimes treat patients who have damage to the skin and soft tissues. This is called surface trauma. Surface trauma includes the following wounds:

- Contusion: a bruise to the skin without damage to penetrating tissue
- Abrasion: a scratch and loss of skin, often caused by friction
- Puncture wounds: narrow, penetrating wounds made by small objects such as nails and splinters
- Laceration: a cut usually made by a sharp object such as a knife or glass

Which of these wounds might require stitches, or sutures?

Answer: _____