

The Nurse: The True Story Behind One of Scandinavia's Most Notorious Criminal Trials

GUIDE October 27, 2022

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Part One What is a Nurse Practitioner (NP)?

A Nurse Practitioner (NP) is an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) that has completed the required nurse practitioner schooling: either a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) or a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). They can serve as either a primary or specialty care provider. This guide will explain how to become a nurse practitioner, what they do, how much you can make, and more.

Nurse Practitioners have more authority than registered nurses and have similar responsibilities to that of a doctor. They can serve as primary care or specialty care providers and typically focus their care on a specific population such as families, children, or the elderly. As clinicians, they focus on health promotion and disease prevention in their patients.

Part Two How to Become a Nurse Practitioner

If you're looking to become a nurse practitioner, you'll need to complete the following steps.

Steps to Becoming a Nurse Practitioner

1. Become a Registered Nurse

The first step to becoming a nurse practitioner is becoming a registered nurse. You'll do this by enrolling in either an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) or Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN) program.

2. Get Your Bachelor's Degree

If you don't already hold a BSN, you may want to enroll in and earn your Bachelor's in Nursing Science degree. Nurses who have their ADN can enroll in accelerated RN-BSN programs, many of which can be completed online. It is possible to go straight from your ADN to an MSN program if you want to skip the step of earning your Bachelor's degree, however. (More on that in step four.)

3. Gain Nursing Experience

Some nurses may choose to skip this step and go right into enrolling in a graduate program, while others choose to get a few years of experience under their belt before continuing their education.

4. Enroll in a Graduate Program (MSN or DNP)

The simplest route to becoming a nurse practitioner for RNs who already have their bachelor's degree is by earning a master's degree.

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For RNs without bachelor's degrees, there are RN-to-MSN programs. You may also see such programs called ADN-to-MSN (which means Associate Degree in Nursing to Master's™s).

Some institutions offer doctoral degrees like Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs, which is the highest level of nursing education available.

5. Earn Your Advanced Practice Nursing Licensure in Practical Nursing

The specifics for NP licensure are set by the individual states, which means that you will have to search the requirements to become an NP in the state that you plan to work in. There is also talk of a national model for NP licensure, but currently, it does vary from state to state. You can view complete state-by-state requirements to become an NP here and be sure to check with the school you plan on attending.

6. Get Your First Nurse Practitioner Job

Congratulations! You've made it and now you're ready to find your first job as a nurse practitioner. You can work with a nurse recruiter or check out nursing job boards to help find the right position for you.

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Part Three Nurse Practitioner Schooling

As we mentioned, there's not just one way to become an NP. Nurse practitioners have several different schooling options depending on where they're starting out and what degree they want to obtain.

Nurse Practitioner Degrees

In order to become a nurse practitioner, you need to complete at least one of these 2 degree options:

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

Deciding between an MSN vs DNP? MSNs might be better for nurses who are looking to specialize clinically, while a DNP may be the better choice if you're looking to get into a leadership position. Those are not hard and fast rules, however; ultimately, the decision depends on the type of education you want.

There has also been talk of changing the requirements for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses from an MSN to a DNP, so that is a consideration as well if you are planning your education advancement further into the future. For instance, if you won't be enrolling in your graduate education for a few years, you should be aware that the requirements may change by then.

Part Four What Do Nurse Practitioners Do?

NPs are healthcare providers that can prescribe medication, examine patients, order diagnostic tests, diagnose illnesses, and provide treatment, much like physicians do.

Their experience as working nurses gives them a unique approach to patient care, while their advanced studies qualify them to take on additional duties that are usually left to physicians.

In fact, as reported by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), it's estimated that NPs can provide 80-90 percent of the care that primary care physicians offer.

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Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice

Nurse practitioners have full practice authority in 25 states, meaning that they do not have to work under the supervision of a doctor.

In the remaining states, NPs still have more authority than RNs, but they need a medical doctor to sign off on certain patient care decisions.

Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice by State

Part Five Nurse Practitioner Specialties

In addition to being a general nurse practitioner, NPs can also specialize in a specific population. They will often attend a nursing program that allows them to specialize in this area and obtain clinical competency. If they choose a specialization, they'll also need to become certified in the specific specialty area.

Family Nurse Practitioner

Family nurse practitioners or Family Practice Nurse Practitioners (FNPs) provide primary health care services for individuals and families throughout their lifespans. They often act as a primary care provider for their patients and this can be especially rewarding for those who enjoy developing long-term relationships and getting to know people over time.

Acute Care Nurse Practitioner

Acute Care Nurse Practitioners (ACNPs) are advanced practice registered nurses that provide care to patients in acute care and/or hospital settings. Acute Care NPs see patients when they are sick, admitted to the hospital, or after a surgical procedure and/or trauma. Their focus is solely on caring for the adult population with complex diseases.

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

Pediatric Nurse Practitioners are Advanced Practice Registered Nurses whose sole focus lies in treating children from infancy through the time they become adults. They see patients on a one-on-one basis, offering care ranging from well check-ups and immunizations to diagnosing illnesses and treating chronic and acute conditions.

Emergency Nurse Practitioner

Emergency Nurse Practitioners assess, diagnose and manage injuries and illnesses that need urgent care. They are able to work with or without supervision, determining which patients need the most immediate care, making decisions about

treatment, monitoring patient conditions, and providing education and consultation.

Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner

Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioners specialize in the care of adults from adolescence all the way up to geriatric care. They work with patients and their caregivers on managing chronic conditions, diseases, and other health conditions.

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners or Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (PMHNPs) specialize in the mental health needs of adults, children, families, groups, and/or communities. They help individuals cope with different psychiatric disorders and illnesses and can also help people with substance abuse disorders.

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

Neonatal Nurse Practitioners care for premature and sick newborns including diagnosing them, providing treatment plans, and prescribing medication. They can also assist in delivering patients in certain settings.

Women's Health Nurse Practitioner

A Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (WHNP) specializes in the comprehensive care of women throughout their lives. They focus on reproductive, obstetric, and gynecological health and usually work in a primary care office setting, rather than a hospital or delivery room.

Orthopedic Nurse Practitioner

An Orthopedic Nurse Practitioner focuses on the care and treatment of patients suffering from musculoskeletal problems. These can include disease and/or injuries of the bones, muscles, joints, and supporting connective tissue.

Aesthetic Nurse Practitioner

Aesthetic Nurse Practitioners specialize in cosmetic medical procedures that improve their patient's appearance. They examine and evaluate patients, counsel them on a variety of procedures, perform those procedures, and care for them as they recover.

Oncology Nurse Practitioner

An oncology nurse practitioner provides comprehensive care to patients who have been diagnosed with cancer. They collaborate with other healthcare providers including physicians to develop treatment plans for cancer patients.

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Part Six Nurse Practitioner Salary

Nurse practitioners earn a median average annual salary of \$120,680 in the United States according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as of May 2022, which places their income at more than double the average annual salary for all other occupations.

Nurse Practitioners make, on average, around \$30,000 more than Registered Nurses each year. And compared to an LPN's annual wages of \$46,240, becoming an NP will more than DOUBLE your earnings.

Nurse Practitioner Salary by State

Nurse Practitioner salaries can vary by location, place of employment, experience, and specialty. So, after you become an NP, additional specializations can drive your salary up even higher, and give you more career opportunities.

Source: BLS, Data extracted June 23, 2021.

NP Salary by State	State	Median Annual	Median Avg Hourly	Alabama	\$99,750	\$48	Alaska	\$123,140	\$59	Arizona	\$121,070	\$58
	Arkansas	\$99,910	\$48	California	\$149,910	\$72	Colorado	\$102,370	\$49	Connecticut	\$125,360	\$60
	Delaware	\$121,470	\$58	District of Columbia	\$121,470	\$58	Florida	\$101,110	\$49	Georgia	\$101,690	\$49
	Hawaii	\$131,000	\$63	Idaho	\$102,060	\$49	Illinois	\$122,960	\$59	Indiana	\$104,020	\$50
	Iowa	\$121,470	\$58	Kansas	\$100,260	\$48	Kentucky	\$102,460	\$48	Louisiana		

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\$103,610 \$50 Maine \$119,550 \$57 Maryland \$104,550 \$50 Massachusetts \$128,160 \$62 Michigan \$102,060 \$49 Minnesota \$127,690 \$61 Mississippi \$101,840 \$49 Missouri \$101,180 \$49 Montana \$122,100 \$59 Nebraska \$103,340 \$50 Nevada \$127,620 \$61 New Hampshire \$121,070 \$58 New Jersey \$129,240 \$62 New Mexico \$121,070 \$58 New York \$128,220 \$62 North Carolina \$102,370 \$49 North Dakota \$103,550 \$50 Ohio \$103,310 \$50 Oklahoma \$109,660 \$53 Oregon \$127,690 \$61 Pennsylvania \$106,700 \$51 Rhode Island \$125,540 \$60 South Carolina \$100,020 \$48 South Dakota \$102,060 \$49 Tennessee \$99,630 \$48 Texas \$121,010 \$58 Utah \$105,220 \$51 Virginia \$102,860 \$49 Vermont \$101,790 \$49 Washington \$128,980 \$62 West Virginia \$100,020 \$48 Wisconsin \$121,310 \$58 Wyoming \$102,370 \$49

Source BLS

Nurse Practitioner Salaries by Specialty

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Part Seven Nurse Practitioner Career Outlook

Nursing is already a stable, in-demand career. But becoming a Nurse Practitioner can give you even more job security.

The BLS predicts that nurse practitioner jobs will increase by 45 percent from 2020 to 2030, which is much faster than most other careers.

The need for primary care is also expected to rise over the next five years because of the aging population. NPs will help meet this increasing demand, especially in underserved areas.

Part Eight Which Schools Have the Best NP Programs?

There are numerous NP programs throughout the country, so our panel of nurses ranked them based on reputation, certification pass rate, cost, accreditation, and acceptance rates to determine that these are some of the best options out there. Because nursing careers take different forms, the top 10 NP programs are ranked in no particular order.

Top 10 Nurse Practitioner Programs

School Graduate Nursing Degrees Offered Tuition Johns Hopkins University Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$1,738 per credit
Emory University Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$1,963 per credit Duke University Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$1,838 per credit
University of Pennsylvania Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$45,248 Columbia University Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$87,242
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$19,062 per year (in-state) and \$40,394 per year (out-of-state)
University of Washington Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$17,919 per year (in-state) and \$31,026 per year (out-of-state)
Vanderbilt University Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$1,716 per credit Ohio State University Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$973 per credit (in-state) and \$2,447 per credit (out-of-state)
University of California - San Francisco Master's, Ph.D., DNP \$12,570 per year (in-state) and \$24,815 per year (out-of-state)

*Source U.S. News and World Report

See the full list of the Top Nurse Practitioner Programs >>

Part Nine Resources for NPs

If you're considering taking this nursing career leap, it's a good idea to take advantage of the resources and information offered by various national professional nursing associations and websites like our own.

Organizations

Part Ten Continuing Education for Nurse Practitioners Even though they are functioning in an APRN role, Nurse Practitioners must maintain their RN certification. In order for an individual to renew their RN license, they will need to fill out an application, complete a specific number of CEU hours, and pay a nominal fee. Each state has specific requirements and it is important to check with the board of nursing prior to applying for license renewal.

CEU hours for your NP certification will vary based on the specialty area. Generally, NPs must have a minimum of 75 contact hours of continuing education in the specialty area. The length of time a license is valid without recertification and CEUs does vary as well.

Part Eleven Nurse Practitioner FAQs

What is the difference between a doctor and a nurse practitioner? A doctor has more clinical abilities and responsibilities than an NP. However, in some states, NPs are independent practitioners.

How many years does it take to become a nurse practitioner? It takes around 6-7 years to become an NP: 4 years to earn your BSN, then 2-3 to earn your NP.

Is a nurse practitioner higher than an RN? An NP does have more advanced training and clinical abilities than an RN.

What is the fastest way to become a nurse practitioner? The fastest way to become an NP is to enroll directly into a BSN program, then apply immediately to an NP program. Alternatively, an RN-NP may take about the same amount of time.

Is it worth becoming a nurse practitioner? NPs do make more money than RNs, have more career options and flexibility, and report higher job satisfaction.

What degree do I need to become a nurse practitioner? You will need a Master's degree or doctorate degree in order to become an NP.

What is the highest-paid nurse practitioner? CRNAs, or Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, make the highest amount of APRNs, averaging about \$183K/year.

Find Nursing Programs Current Degree Current Degree No Degree/License ADN (RN) BSN (RN) MSN (RN) LPN/LVN Medical Assistant CNA Paramedic Other Desired Degree Desired Degree Show Me Programs

*Indicates an affiliate link. At no additional cost to you, Nurse.org may earn a commission if you click through and use this service.

Reference

[Research on Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy with Adults \(The EFPP Monograph Series\)](#)

[Transitions Theory: Middle Range and Situation Specific Theories in Nursing Research and Practice \(Meleis, Transitions Theory\)](#)