

Nursing

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Nursing is a profession within the health care sector focused on the care of individuals, families, and communities so they may attain, maintain, or recover optimal health and quality of life. Nurses work in a wide variety of specialties where they work independently and as part of a team to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate care. Nursing is the largest health care profession, with over 4 million registered nurses in the United States alone.

The core of nursing is the establishment of a caring relationship with patients, which is the foundation for all nursing interventions. Nurses use the nursing process to assess patients, diagnose actual or potential health problems, plan care, implement interventions, and evaluate the outcomes. Key aspects of nursing include:

- Advocating for the rights, health and safety of patients
 - Providing and coordinating patient care
- Educating patients and the public about various health conditions
- Providing emotional support and empathy to patients and their families
- Participating in research to improve the quality of care

Nursing practice is guided by the nursing process, a scientific method that provides a framework for individualizing patient care. The nursing process consists of five steps:

1. **Assessment:** Collecting data about the patient's health status
2. **Diagnosis:** Identifying actual or potential health problems
3. **Planning:** Setting goals and determining nursing interventions
4. **Implementation:** Carrying out the plan of care
5. **Evaluation:** Determining if the patient's goals have been met

Nurses practice in a variety of settings, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, outpatient clinics, schools, and home health. They work with patients across the lifespan, from premature infants to the elderly. Specialty areas of nursing include critical care, emergency, pediatrics, geriatrics, oncology, and mental health, among others.

Nursing is a dynamic, intellectually challenging profession that requires critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and a strong knowledge base. With the aging population and increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, the demand for skilled nurses is expected to grow. Nurses play a vital role in promoting health, preventing illness, and caring for the sick and disabled.