

NEVER,

ever, **EVER**

let anyone

tell you

it'll be

easy...

JUST

worth it.



Nursing, you

Thinking about a career? Think registered nurse! It's more than a job, it's a growing profession offering an astonishing range of choices and opportunities.

You believe in a healthy lifestyle? Janet has been talking to teenagers about how to deal with sex and drugs. "These kids have their whole lives before them and I feel it's so important to help them now when they need it. With some groups I get into fitness and diet, too. They really want the information and someone to talk to."

You want excitement? So does Robin, so she works in the emergency department of a city hospital. "When people burst through those doors, they need help, fast and our ER team gives it. I have to think on my feet here, make immediate decisions about what a person needs. No other job could give me the same challenge – or satisfaction."

Intrigued by health questions? So is Nicole, and she's finding the answers. Nicole is the head of a research team studying the care needs of AIDS patients. "I used to give nursing care to people in their homes and then a great AIDS patient I had motivated me to move into research. I was shocked by how little knowledge and how few resources there seemed to be to care for people like Ted, so I decided to do something about it."

More interested in helping people over the long term? That's what Michael wants, so he's head nurse at a rehabilitation centre. "A lot of

rehab patients start out fighting against our care; they're depressed, angry, and worried about their future. Helping them work through that is as important as their physical therapy. It's an incredible feeling to help a person go through the whole process back to health."

Michael, Janet, Robin and Nicole became registered nurses because they wanted to work with people in a career that offers challenges and the independence to make decisions. Nursing involves caring for the whole person – the physical, intellectual and social needs. Nurses also plan and deliver health programs for groups or communities.

Nurses are the heart of care. As a registered nurse, you can make a difference in one person's life through one-on-one, and in the health of all Canadians through research and leadership.

Jobs, the real story

This is an excellent time to enter nursing as there is a shortage. At some point in their life, every Canadian will require the services of a nurse. Since many nurses will soon retire, Canada needs bright young men and women to choose nursing as a career. Changes in the health care system continue to broaden the opportunities for nurses. An especially important trend is the increasing number of services that emphasize illness prevention and health promotion programs. Many of these are planned and staffed by registered nurses.

Registered nurses earn salaries that compare with other professionals with a similar amount of education. Health care is offered

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24 hours a day, so expect to work some nights and weekends, like doctors, law enforcement officers and others who provide essential services.

As in any profession, salaries vary across the country, and people make more as they gain experience and responsibility. Graduates of degree programs usually have more opportunities for advancement, and in some provinces, make more money than graduates of diploma programs. Your provincial or territorial nurses' association can provide current salary ranges.

Choices... lots!

Nursing is full of opportunities to grow, to advance and to change your career direction. Whatever your interest – working with children, scientific procedures and high tech equipment, teaching and promoting healthy practices, developing your management skills – nursing has something for you. Here are just a few examples:

IN THE COMMUNITY:

health clinics
schools
wellness programs
in the workplace
doctors' offices
home care
family planning clinics
poison control centres
prenatal and
well-baby clinics
rehabilitation centres
sexually transmitted
disease units
AIDS hospices

IN A HOSPITAL:

emergency
intensive care
operating room
post-surgery
maternity
cardiovascular
(heart)
oncology (cancer)
psychiatry
pediatrics
(children)
palliative
(dying people)
geriatrics (seniors)

One of the most exciting opportunities for nurses in Canada is Northern nursing. Often, community health centres in Canada's North are run completely by the nurse – independent and in charge. Many Aboriginal nurses return home to help their communities, other nurses find they enjoy learning about a different culture.

The great thing about nursing is that your choices never end.

With some years of experience and further studies you could branch out in almost any direction imaginable. After a few years in practice you might decide to become an advanced practice nurse. An expert nurse with a master's degree, an advanced practice nurse provides direct care to clients and serves as a role model and consultant to other practising nurses. There are currently two types of ANPs in Canada, clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioner.

Or you might decide, like Nicole, that you want to investigate current issues in health care. On the leading edge of health care discoveries, nurse researchers design studies, collect data and analyze results. Their findings contribute to the vast body of scientific knowledge that supports and improves nursing.

Leadership

All nurses are teachers, helping people learn to prevent illness and manage health problems. But you might want to become a nurse educator, preparing future nurses to enter practice. You could work at a community college or a university, and research would be part of what you do.

our future.

A nurse administrator coordinates nursing services in a hospital or community health centre. Handling large budgets, supervising staff and setting the standards for excellent care takes strength and good management skills.

The sky is the limit

And any of these choices could lead you still further. Nurses' ideas and opinions are sought after by the media, politicians, and national and international groups. Imagine being a consultant to Health Canada, or the World Health Organization.

Or you could travel. Northern Canada is a close-to-home example, but Canadian nurses are so highly regarded that other countries – both developing and developed – actively recruit them. Your skills and knowledge could take you places. The possibilities are endless!

Degree or diploma?

If you're thinking about a career in nursing, you should seriously consider studying for a degree (BN or BNSc). More career opportunities and the possibility of graduate study will be open to nurses with university degrees. Most provinces already require a baccalaureate in nursing (BN or BScN) to enter the profession.

Degree programs take four years. Besides learning social and physical sciences, and nursing, as in the diploma program, university programs generally offer additional studies in leadership, health teaching, research and other disciplines.

Diploma programs take three years. Graduates generally work in hospitals, nursing homes or other structured settings. Many colleges now offer their diploma courses in collaboration with a university with the option of continuing on after graduation to obtain a degree. However, getting a diploma and then a degree generally takes longer, and costs more, than enrolling in a degree program from the beginning.

Nursing students in both university and diploma schools of nursing will study psychology, child development, sociology, anatomy and physiology. The nursing courses include theory and clinical practice. You will be supervised and supported in the clinical setting to ensure the safety of patients and your own safety.

If you are interested in continuing your education, master's and doctoral programs in nursing are available in many places in Canada.

Get ready

Entrance requirements differ from one school to another. Generally, the admission requirements are high school graduation with senior level English or French, mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology. You can contact your provincial nurses' association or individual schools for their specific requirements and information on funding.

Caring for people, the independence to make decisions, the challenge and excitement of being on the leading edge of health care. Sound interesting? Then ask today for more information about a career as a registered nurse!

Associations

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