

Frequently Asked Questions about Nursing

Is nursing for me?

There are several career self-assessment resources available online. One useful site is:

<http://www.rileyguide.com/assess.html>

What are the different types of nurses?

- **Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)** CNAs provide hands on care to people who are unable to take care of themselves. This may include such tasks as feeding, bathing, and dressing patients, as well as assisting nurses with diagnostic tests and clinical procedures. Typically, CNAs work under the direction of a RN and carry out duties assigned by the nurse. Work sites may include nursing homes and hospitals. Training involves a five-week program offered by the American Red Cross (Knoxville – 865-584-2999). In Tennessee the median salary is about \$24,040 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics most recent 2009 report.
- **Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)** – LPNs are responsible for patient care on a personal level. They are usually responsible for monitoring patients' vital signs and performing procedures such as dressing wounds, giving enemas, treating bedsores, and administering prescribed medicines. LPNs work under the supervision of an RN or a physician in many different types of settings, including doctors' offices and hospitals. Training usually involves one year of classes at a hospital or a technology center. In the Knoxville area, this program is offered by Tennessee Technology Center (865-546-5567) and by Blount Memorial Hospital (865-273-1544). In Tennessee the median salary is about \$35,990 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics most recent 2009 report.
- **Registered Nurses (RN)** – RNs have direct responsibility for patients, under the supervision of a physician. A registered nurse will assess patient health problems and needs, develop and implement nursing care plans, and maintain medical records. Training requires three to four years of college; as indicated in the question below. In Tennessee the median salary for RNs was about \$59,520 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics most recent 2009 report.
- **Nurse Practitioner (NP)** – Advanced practice nurses such as: nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse midwives, and certified registered nurse anesthetists provide high-quality healthcare services similar to those of a doctor. NPs diagnose and treat a wide range of health problems. Besides clinical care, NPs focus on health promotion, disease prevention, health education and counseling. Entry-level preparation for NP practice is a graduate degree. While most NP programs currently award master's degrees and/or post-master's certificates, an increasing number of NP programs award doctoral degrees. In 2004, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing recommended that a shift in preparing all advanced practice nurses, including NPs, to the doctoral level by 2015. A BSN is required for entry into a master's or doctorate level nursing program.

What are the different ways I can become a Registered Nurse (RN)?

- **Associate's of Science in Nursing (ASN or AASN)** – ASN and AASN degrees usually require about a year of pre-nursing general education courses followed by two years of Nursing School (in which the student takes approximately 9-12 hours each semester). Upon graduation, students are eligible to take licensure examination (NCLEX-RN).

Local ASN and AASN Programs:

Pellissippi State Community College

Roane State Community College

Walters State Community College

Lincoln Memorial University

- **Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)** – BSN degrees require about two years of pre-nursing general education courses followed by two years of Nursing School (in which the student completes about 15-17 credits per semester). Upon graduation, students are eligible to take licensure examination (NCLEX-RN). In addition to traditional BSN degrees, all of the area BSN colleges offer BSN degrees for those who are already RNs (RN to BSN programs). In fact, PSCC has articulation agreements with East Tennessee State University and Lincoln Memorial University allowing PSCC's AASN graduates to transition smoothly into their RN-BSN programs.

Local BSN Programs:

University of Tennessee
East Tennessee State University
Tennessee Wesleyan College (in conjunction with Fort Sanders Hospital)
Carson Newman College
Lincoln Memorial University
King College

What are the differences between an Associate degree RN and Bachelor degree RN?

Starting pay is often the same for those with either degree. However, the BSN has more opportunities for advancement, as well as working in more technical, specialized areas of nursing. Additionally, only RNs holding a BSN degree may continue into graduate school to earn an MSN or DNP (general MSN or nurse practitioner). There are several local programs designed for nurses who have the associate degree to earn a BSN, often while working.

What can I do as an RN?

- Hospital nursing (e.g. intensive care unit, pediatrics, emergency/flight, labor and delivery, psychiatry/mental health, oncology, ambulatory care, surgical, neurology etc.)
- Office/Clinic nursing
- Community/Public health nursing (government, private agencies, schools)
- Occupational/Industrial nursing
- Home health nursing
- Long-term care facility nursing
- Travel nursing
- Nursing supervisor/manager
- Hospice nursing
- Insurance company nursing

What does the job market look like for the nursing profession?

The job outlook is promising. There are currently more job opportunities than there are nurses to fill the positions. This shortage allows nurses to be more selective in choosing their practice settings. In 1996, 1,971,000 RNs were employed in the United States. By the year 2004, there were over 2,400,000 jobs for RNs. By 2020, more than 808,000 jobs for RNs are expected to be unfilled in the U.S.

Advising for Pre-nursing Majors

All pre-nursing advising is done by specialized pre-nursing advisors in the Pre-nursing Advising Center located in AL107 on the Hardin Valley Campus. Advisors should be seen during early registration or any time advice is needed concerning course choices. If you are planning to attend PSCC for pre-nursing courses you must declare a nursing major by completing a change of major form in the PSCC Admissions Office.

Visit these helpful websites:

www.nln.org

www.nursesource.org

www.discovernursing.com

www.allnursingschools.com

<http://nursing-education-tn.org>