

Introduction

Nursing is a cornerstone career in the health care field--evidenced by the 2.6 million nurses in the United States--making up the largest occupational field in the health care industry. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, seven of the twenty fastest growing careers are in health care. With a projected 22 percent job growth predicted between 2006 and 2016, nursing is a career field that commands interest.

Now that you've completed your rigorous education at nursing school, it's time to take your place in this exciting, yet challenging field. However, this step may not be without difficulties--after all, the real world moves much more quickly than nursing school.

You may be looking for ways to survive your first year of nursing. That's where the *Insider's Guide to Your First Year in Nursing* comes into play. It is your guide, your reference, to dealing with the pressures of the first year of your nursing career. This guide can help you gain a better perspective on the challenges of first year nurses, from dealing with nursing orientation to coping with the loss of a patient.

The Insider's Guide to Your First Year in Nursing provides an in-depth look at nursing and the responsibilities that may come your way during your first year. It provides you with useful information in the following areas:

- An introduction to your first year of nursing
- An overview of nursing orientation
- Tips for working with doctors
- An insider's look at doing rounds
- A discussion of day shift versus night shift
- Ways to understand your patient
- Tools to communicate effectively with patients, their families, and their loved ones
- Caring for terminally ill patients
- Methods for dealing with the loss of a patient

Coupled with expert articles about nursing, this guide offers a series of Frequently Asked Questions about nursing, as well as a handy glossary related to nursing.

From understanding the basics of your first year of nursing to dealing with the emotional stresses of the job, this reference has the insight, advice, and answers you need to make your first year of nursing a success. The decision to become a nurse was a great one and you are well on your way to making a difference in the lives of others.

The Insider's Guide to Your First Year in Nursing is your companion on that terrific journey.



Nursing: An In-Demand Profession

Introduction to Nursing

You've gone through nursing school and earned your nursing degree. Now what? Your journey as a first-year nurse should challenge you, fulfill you, and ultimately remind you of why you opted for such a dynamic profession!

You have chosen one of the most in-demand professions available today, and that means job security, flexible schedules, and financial stability--and it also means a vast emotional reward.

What more could you ask for?

Nursing: You've Chosen an In-Demand Profession

By earning your nursing degree, you have joined an elite group of over 2.5 million nurses who have found rewarding, exciting jobs in hospitals, private practice, home care, and the like. As advances in medicine lead to better treatment and a longer life expectancy for the population, nurses should be at the forefront of providing care and support. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, opportunities for registered nurses are expected to jump by 23 percent between 2006 and 2016, while licensed practical nurses should see job growth of over 14 percent.

The current nursing shortage, brought on by a lack of experienced faculty at nursing schools and the retirement of older nurses, means your career options in the nursing field are wide open. The question is not where you can find a job--the question is--which job do you prefer?

But it gets better. Nursing is considered one of the few recession-proof occupations, and there are several reasons why. Nursing cannot be outsourced--the work has to be done right there, with the patient, so the health care industry is a very secure place to work. New technology is booming, and more nurses will be required to keep up with the advances.

But the most important point is also the most simple:

"People are always going to be sick, and the nurses are the front line in hospitals," nursing student Heidi Sadowsky pointed out in a recent article on CNN.

Emotional Rewards of Nursing

Nurses report to work not knowing what might be in store. It could be a day of emotional upheavals if they lose a patient. Then again, it could be a day of tremendous victories and joy.

Regardless, one thing is certain: nurses have the opportunity, every single day, to change the lives of the patients they encounter.

But as seasoned nurses know, it's not just about the patient--it's about the families as well. By providing emotional support to the patient's loved ones while giving excellent medical support to the patient, nurses make a very difficult situation a bit easier for everyone.

That can be a very rewarding thing, but it can also have tough moments.

"Perhaps no job has so many highs and lows," says Roberto Parra, a registered nurse at University Medical Center of El Paso.

"On a good day, no job is more uplifting."

Nursing Offers Job Security, Financial Stability, and Flexibility

As a first-year nurse, you can breathe easy knowing that a long, stable career is ensured. In fact, there is no better time to enter the health care field. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, registered nurses are expected to have the fastest-growing job prospects of any other occupation, with over half a million new jobs becoming available between 2006 and 2016.



The income is enticing, too.

- The median annual salary for a Licensed Practical Nurse was \$39,063 in 2008
- The median annual salary of all registered nurses in 2008 was \$62,450
- Nurses who specialize, such as surgical nurses or clinical specialists, can expect to make even more

Making good money as a nurse doesn't mean you have to sacrifice other parts of your life.

Flexible schedules are a hallmark of the nursing profession. Health care never takes a break--it is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Nurses are required for every shift.

Working during the day leaves your nights free, and choosing to work nights allows you the luxury of free time during the day. Even swing shifts can be an excellent fit for the busy nurse with family obligations. The longer you work as a nurse, the choosier you can be about carving out time for your other interests.

Now is a Great Time to Be a Nurse

You rose to the challenge of earning your nursing degree. Now it is time to reap the rewards!

This guide will help you along the path of a first-year nurse. We hope it will be a useful tool for your journey into this admirable and in-demand profession.