Nurses Aide/Nursing Assistant

Overview

Wherever there is a need for personal care, certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), or nurses aides, are there. Nursing assistants are the caregivers who, for the most part, help patients of all ages perform the most basic day-to-day tasks. CNAs work under the supervision of a nurse, and since they have extensive daily contact with each patient, they play a key role in keeping the nurse up-to-date on vital information about patients’ conditions.

Nursing assistants work closely with patients and provide assistance with such tasks as:

- Dressing
- Bathing
- Feeding
- Making beds
- Toilet Assistance; catheter care
- Taking vital signs (Blood pressure, pulse, etc)
- Helping patients walk
- Assisting with range-of-motion exercises
- Helping wheelchair-bound patients (entails heavy lifting)
- Turning bedridden patients regularly
- Reporting all changes to the nurse
- Safety awareness
- Documentation
- Post Mortem Care

To learn more about this career, watch the video profile of "Nursing Aides, Orderlies and Attendants."

Working Conditions

Due to the staffing shortage in recent years, a vast majority of nursing assistants find themselves in the challenging position of attempting to provide quality care to far too many patients at once. The turnover rate for nursing assistants is high, due largely to the job’s heavy workload and physical demands.

Salaries for this career vary widely between states, and even between work environments. In Massachusetts, for example, an average starting CNA salary is in the neighborhood of $11-$12 hourly. Other states may have lower or higher starting rates. CNAs with five or more years experience can command up to $18 hourly.
**Academic Requirements**

Training programs to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA) can be found through the Red Cross, community colleges or medical facilities. Classes are generally taught by a Registered Nurse, and the length of training depends on the program. Through a facility, classes may run for two weeks, with a month or more of hands-on training to follow. The classes offer the basics of what to expect with this job; however, this is a career in which skill levels and confidence dramatically improve once the nursing assistant becomes involved in the daily routine of actual caregiving. Search for schools that provide training for this career.

To find out more about a career as a CNA and to contact current practitioners, use the active message board found at [www.NursingAssistants.net](http://www.NursingAssistants.net). This site also contains recent articles, education opportunities and links to other CNA resources.

**Professional Associations**

- Nursing Assistant Central
- [www.nursingassistants.net](http://www.nursingassistants.net)

**Funding Opportunities**

- Search for funding opportunities in this field

**Enrichment Programs**

- Search for enrichment programs in this field

**Schools and Academic Programs**

- Search for academic degree and certificate programs in this field

**Source**

- [nursingassistantcentral.homestead.com](http://nursingassistantcentral.homestead.com)

**Learn more about this field:**

- Allied Health Professions