

# Nurse Practitioner

[NOC code\(s\): 3152](#)

[Interest code\(s\): S M D](#)

Nurse practitioners are registered nurses who have advanced training in health assessment, health promotion and illness prevention. They diagnose and treat health problems, order and interpret tests, and prescribe drugs.

## Also Known As

Nurse



Regulated Occupation

## RELATED OCCUPATIONS

[Community Health Nurse](#) [Family Physician](#) [Health Coach](#) [Midwife](#) [Registered Nurse Specialist](#)  
[Physician](#)

## Full Profile Duties

Duties and responsibilities in this occupation vary from province to province. In Alberta, nurse practitioners may:

- complete advanced, thorough and focused health assessments
- diagnose health problems
- support and counsel patients regarding health problems
- manage and carry out patient care on an ongoing basis
- manage complex chronic illness
- order and interpret diagnostic tests
- research and critically evaluate evidence for the best care available
- read, compile and integrate research into their work
- refer patients to other health care providers as needed
- prescribe medications to treat diseases, disorders and injuries
- consult and collaborate with physicians and other professionals
- engage in opportunities (programs) to promote community health and prevent illness and injury.

Nurse practitioners work independently across the spectrum of health services. They may work mainly with adults, children or families, or they may focus on areas such as:

- acute care
- primary care
- community health (including urban and rural community clinics and nursing outposts)
- long-term care
- caring for people in particular age groups (infants, children, seniors)
- specialty units and clinics (for example, cancer care, mental health, occupational health, palliative care, women's health)
- emergency care.

## Working Conditions

Nurse practitioners work in a variety of health care settings, sometimes in remote communities. They may work regular clinic hours and be on call for emergencies. Or they might work shifts including nights, weekends and holidays.

Nurse practitioners are often exposed to infectious diseases and chemicals. They are required to handle items weighing up to 20 kilograms. Their work can be mentally, emotionally and physically demanding.

## Personal Characteristics

Nurse practitioners need to possess:

- problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- excellent verbal and written communication skills
- excellent organizational skills
- the ability to make good decisions quickly in stressful situations
- patience, understanding and a caring attitude
- flexibility and enthusiasm
- the ability to lead and work co-operatively with others
- general good health.

They should enjoy:

- working with and consulting others
- solving problems
- providing care
- directing the work of others.

## Educational Requirements

Nurse practitioners start their careers as registered nurses. After 4,500 hours of clinical nursing experience, the recommended education route is a master's degree in advanced nursing practice.

Prior to becoming a registered nurse practitioner, applicants must pass the required national registration exam.

## Related Education

The following schools offer programs or courses that are related to this occupation but are not required to enter the field.

Click on the banner below to see the list of schools.

University of Lethbridge

- [Master of Nursing](#)
- [Master of Science - Nursing](#)

For a broad list of programs and courses that may be related to this occupation try [searching using keywords](#).

## Certification Requirements

Nurse Practitioner

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## Legislation

Under Alberta's [Health Professions Act](#) and [Registered Nurses Profession Regulation](#), only members of the [College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta \(CARNA\)](#) on the nurse practitioner register may call themselves or practice as a Nurse Practitioner or NP.

## ***Education***

Nurse practitioners must: (1) be registered nurses in Alberta, (2) have completed a bachelor's degree in nursing, (3) have completed a recognized nurse practitioner program, (4) have 4,500 hours of experience as a registered nurse, and (5) pass the national nurse practitioner registered nurses examination. Nurse practitioners who do not meet these criteria may apply and be assessed under a Substantial Equivalent Competence process. For official, detailed information about registration requirements, visit the CARNA website or contact CARNA.

## ***Working in Alberta***

Nurse practitioners who are registered and in good standing with a regulatory body elsewhere in Canada (except Quebec) are eligible for registration in Alberta if their scope of practice and competencies are similar. Applications from Quebec will be assessed individually.

## ***Critical Contact Details***

College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta  
11620 - 168 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Canada T5M 4A6  
Phone number: 780-451-0043  
Toll-free phone number: 1-800-252-9392  
Fax number: 780-452-3276  
Website: [www.nurses.ab.ca](http://www.nurses.ab.ca)

## **Employment and Advancement**

Above-average occupational growth is expected in Alberta for 2016 to 2020. Job openings are a result of employment turnover and newly created positions.

Nurse practitioners work in health care facilities such as hospitals, community-based health centres and clinics. Many work in small or remote communities that do not have local physicians.

Nurse practitioner is not an entry-level position.

Nurse practitioners are part of the larger 2011 National Occupational Classification 3124: Allied primary health practitioners. In Alberta, 92% of people employed in this classification work in the [Health Care and Social Assistance](#) industry.

The [employment outlook](#) in this occupation will be influenced by a wide variety of factors including:

- trends and events that affect overall employment (especially in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry)
- location in Alberta
- employment turnover (work opportunities that come up when people leave existing positions)
- occupational growth (work opportunities that come up when new positions are created)
- size of the occupation.

More than 45,000 Albertans are employed in the Registered nurses occupational group. This group is expected to have an above-average annual growth of 3.6% from 2016 to 2020. As a result, the forecast is for 1,620 new positions to be created each year. This is in addition to job openings created by employment turnover. Note: As nurse practitioners form only a part of this larger occupational group, only some of these newly created positions will be for nurse practitioners.

Employment turnover is expected to increase as members of the baby boom generation retire over the next few years.

## Wage and Salary

Nurse practitioners are exempt from nursing unions and therefore negotiate their own salaries.

Nurse practitioners are part of the larger 2011 National Occupational Classification 3124: Allied primary health practitioners.

According to the 2015 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey, Albertans in the Allied primary health practitioners occupational group earned on average from \$40.75 to \$48.37 an hour. The overall average wage was \$46.94 an hour. For more information, see the [Allied primary health practitioners](#) wage profile.

## Related High School Subjects

- English Language Arts
- Health, Recreation and Human Services
  - Community Care Services
  - Health Care Services
  - Human and Social Services
- Mathematics
- Science
  - Biology
  - Chemistry

## Related Post-Secondary Fields of Study

- Health Care and Medical Sciences

## Other Sources of Information

College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) website: [www.nurses.ab.ca](http://www.nurses.ab.ca)

For more information on career planning, education and jobs, visit the [Alberta Learning Information Service \(ALIS\) website](#), call the [Alberta Career Information Hotline](#) toll-free at 1-800-661-3753 or 780-422-4266 in Edmonton, or visit an [Alberta Works Centre](#) near you.

The information contained in this profile is current as of the dates shown. **Salary, employment outlook** and **educational program** information may change without notice. It is advised that you confirm this information before making any career decisions.