

When choosing a career in nursing, prospective nurses can focus on specialized areas of medicine. The following list provides 31 nursing career paths, along with the requirements to successfully obtain each role.

This guide highlights the basic role of nurses within each specialization and includes projected job growth rates and average salary data. A general overview of each nursing career option can help prospective professionals determine if a specialty career in nursing aligns with their professional goals.

Specialty Career Choices to Consider

We selected the following 31 best nursing jobs for their salaries, work settings, and high demand. An individual seeking a career in nursing can consult this list to identify their ideal role.

1. Certified Dialysis Nurse

- **How to Become One:** A certified dialysis nurse needs 2,000 hours of experience caring for nephrology and dialysis patients over two years. Each candidate must also complete 15 hours of continuing education in nephrology, earn a registered nurse (RN) license, and pass a certification test.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 7% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$73,831 per year

2. Legal Nurse Consultant

A certified [legal nurse consultant](#) uses their expertise to consult on medical lawsuits, offering information about the healthcare system.

- **How to Become One:** These consultants need RN licensure, but a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) degree is not always required.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 7% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$78,658 per year

3. Nurse Midwife

A [nurse midwife](#) delivers babies and provides healthcare before, during, and after birth for mother and child. They conduct gynecological exams, deliver prenatal and postnatal care, and provide family planning information.

- **How to Become One:** A nurse midwife needs a master of science in nursing (MSN). Many employers seek candidates who have completed midwife specialty programs.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [12% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$97,787 per year](#)

4. Nurse Anesthetist

A nurse anesthetist provides patients with anesthesia for surgery and can assist in caring for individuals during their time in the operating room.

- **How to Become One:** A [nurse anesthetist](#) needs two years of experience as a nurse with their BSN before enrolling in an MSN in nurse anesthesia program. A doctoral degree may also be required.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [14% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$161,000 per year](#)

5. Nurse Case Manager

A [nurse care manager](#) monitors patient progress, suggests alternative treatments, and evaluates care.

- **How to Become One:** Some RN-to-MSN programs offer case management options.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [32% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$74,051 per year](#)

6. Nurse Educator

[Nurse educators](#) combine a passion for teaching with clinical expertise to design, evaluate, and implement education programs for nurses in schools, universities, and colleges.

- **How to Become One:** A nurse educator needs a doctoral or master's degree in nursing.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [18% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$77,403 per year](#)

7. Nurse Practitioner

- **How to Become One:** An NP must earn an RN license with at least an [MSN degree](#).
- **Projected Job Growth:** [45% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$98,859 per year](#)

8. Nurse Researcher

[Nurse researchers](#) create reports based on analysis and research gathered in the nursing field. They aim to improve medical and healthcare services.

- **How to Become One:** Although RN candidates with BSNs qualify, individuals with MSNs or higher have a better chance of obtaining the position.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$72,446 per year](#)

9. Informatics Nurse

[Informatics nurses](#) provide healthcare data to doctors, nurses, patients, and other healthcare providers, along with providing training on updated applications.

- **How to Become One:** An informatics nurse needs at least a BSN, though many employers require candidates to possess an MSN in health informatics, quality management, or healthcare management.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [32% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$84,273 per year](#)

10. Endocrinology Pediatric Nurse

Pediatric nurses specializing in endocrinology help children with diseases and disorders affecting the endocrine system, along with educating patients and their parents about sexual development and growth issues.

- **How to Become One:** An [endocrinology pediatric nurse](#) needs an RN license, two years of experience, and internships at pediatric-endocrinology locations.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$63,335 per year](#)

11. Travel Nurse

[Travel nurses](#) provide healthcare services to medical facilities and hospitals with short-term needs.

- **Projected Job Growth:** 7% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$80,000 per year

12. Chief Nursing Officer

[Chief nursing officers](#) provide strategic planning help, administrative leadership, and senior management expertise in healthcare organizations.

- **How to Become One:** A chief nursing officer must have an RN license and complete graduate programs in nursing.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 32% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$134,604 per year

13. Nursing Administrator

[Nursing administrators](#) provide management support and specialized human resources within medical facilities. They also recruit, train, and hire staff, along with handling various business aspects within healthcare organizations.

- **How to Become One:** These administrators need nursing experience and graduate-level nursing degrees.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 32% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$87,542 per year

14. Critical Care Nurse

Critical care nurses work in hospital intensive care units, often collaborating with teams to provide the best possible care.

- **How to Become One:** A [critical care nurse](#) needs a BSN, plus additional training and continuous education to stay relevant in the field of critical care. They should have at least two years of experience in critical care.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 7% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$70,147 per year

15. Diabetes Nurse

Diabetes nurses work with individuals with diabetes, providing patient education, including fitness and nutrition information.

- **How to Become One:** Each candidate must become an RN and work in a facility specializing in diabetes. A diabetes nurse needs an MSN and 500 hours working in a diabetic clinic.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 13% increase from 2019-2029

16. Family Nurse Practitioner

A [family nurse practitioner](#) takes care of most of a person's ailments throughout their lives. They examine patients, diagnose illnesses, and prescribe treatments.

- **How to Become One:** Each candidate needs RN licensure, along with a BSN and an MSN.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [45% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$97,011 per year](#)

17. Health Policy Nurse

[Health policy nurses](#) work with patients on a social level, creating policies to promote a healthier population, analyzing laws and suggesting new policies where necessary.

- **How to Become One:** A health policy nurse needs an RN license, a BSN, and an MSN, along with completing a 10-week residency with an appropriate facility.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [32% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$64,168 per year](#)

18. Medical-Surgical Nurse

Medical-surgical nurses perform several jobs, including caring for and monitoring adult patients, working with medications, and assisting in surgeries.

- **How to Become One:** A [medical-surgical nurse](#) needs an RN license, two years of experience, and 2,000 hours working in a surgical nursing facility before passing a credential exam.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$59,657 per year](#)

19. Nurse Advocate

A nurse advocate provides a link between medical professionals, doctors, and patients to explore alternative treatment options.

- **How to Become One:** A [nurse advocate](#) needs an RN license and a BSN. After some experience in a hospital, candidates need continued education in financial and social matters relating to healthcare.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$66,130 per year](#)

Since few attorneys have medical knowledge of nurses, [nurse attorneys](#) typically remain in high demand. These professionals work in various settings, including hospital legal departments and litigation firms.

- **How to Become One:** A nurse attorney needs a BSN and an RN license, followed by three years of education at a law school and successful completion of a bar exam.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [4% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$78,658 per year](#)

21. Pain Management Nurse

A pain management nurse examines patients and helps determine the cause of the pain before consulting with other nurses and doctors to decide on the correct course of treatment.

- **How to Become One:** [Pain management nurses](#) need a BSN and an RN license. Each candidate must possess 2,000 hours of experience in pain management and have worked full time as an RN for two years before taking the certification exam.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [45% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$60,000 per year](#)

22. Perianesthesia Nurse

A perianesthesia nurse works with individuals coming out of anesthesia.

- **How to Become One:** A perianesthesia nurse needs an RN license and a BSN, along with years of experience. Each candidate can pursue electives in perianesthesia and anesthesia and aim to complete 1,800 hours in a perianesthesia setting before taking the certification exam.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [45% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$161,000 per year](#)

23. Psychiatric Nurse

[Psychiatric nurses](#) use experience and knowledge in mental health to help their patients navigate mental illnesses, helping them to avoid disability, social isolation, and other issues.

- **How to Become One:** These nurses need a BSN from an accredited college. Candidates planning to diagnose or prescribe medications need a master's degree or higher.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$66,906 per year](#)

Trauma nurses work in emergency rooms and urgent care centers.

- **How to Become One:** A [trauma nurse](#) needs an RN license and two years of emergency room experience to apply for certification.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$67,324 per year](#)

25. Orthopedic Nurse

Orthopedic nurses offer care for patients suffering from musculoskeletal ailments, such as joint replacement or arthritis.

- **How to Become One:** These nurses need an RN license and a BSN.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$66,363 per year](#)

26. Neonatal Nurse

A neonatal nurse works with premature babies, typically within intensive care.

- **How to Become One:** A [neonatal nurse](#) needs at least a BSN, though many employers require an MSN and specialized training or experience with neonatal patients.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$68,760 per year](#)

27. Pediatric Nurse

Pediatric nurses work with children in intensive care or clinical settings to provide specialized care.

- **How to Become One:** A [pediatric nurse](#) needs at least a BSN, although many have an MSN. Candidates should also possess specialized experience and training working with children.
- **Projected Job Growth:** [7% increase from 2019-2029](#)
- **Average Salary:** [\\$61,440 per year](#)

28. Geriatric Nurse

[Geriatric nurses](#) work with elderly patients in nursing homes or hospitals, handling these patients' specific challenges, such as dementia, arthritis, and heart or lung problems.

- Average Salary: \$65,000 per year

29. Public Health Nurse

Public health nurses care for entire populations, generally focusing on preventative medicine by educating patients about health issues and how to make improvements.

- **How to Become One:** A public health nurse must possess RN licensure and a BSN, plus experience as a regular nurse. Some public health nurses hold an MSN.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 7% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$59,560 per year

30. Oncology Nurse

An oncology nurse provides specialist care for cancer patients in clinical care centers, homes, or hospitals by administering chemotherapy and other treatments.

- **How to Become One:** Oncology nurses need a BSN, along with experience working as nurses for several years. Nurses may then earn certifications in oncology nursing.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 7% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$75,050 per year

31. Clinical Nurse

A clinical nurse treats and diagnoses patients with serious health conditions in hospitals and clinics.

- **How to Become One:** A clinical nurse needs a BSN and an MSN, plus specialized clinical nurse training.
- **Projected Job Growth:** 7% increase from 2019-2029
- **Average Salary:** \$91,720 per year