

Salute to  
Nurses



# Supporting Nurses

These heroes are the gears that make our health care system work.

Long hours, short staffing and difficult cases can all too often lead to stress and burn-out. The COVID-19 pandemic has receded, but nurses are still managing countless cases of flu, stroke, heart attacks, injury and other common ailments.

All of it is made worse by patients and family members who are impatient, uncooperative or simply rude. Let's join together to treat nurses with the kindness and respect that they deserve — both at the office and in our communities.

Here's how to show your appreciation:

## **OBEY THE RULES**

Avoid the doctor's office if you can through better nutrition, regular exercise and making good life choices. Get vaccinated as recommended, take your medications and always follow the advice you get from health care professionals.

If you get sick or simply need a checkup, do your part when visiting the doctor's office or hospital by waiting patiently and following instructions. There is little nurses can do about the number of other patients waiting in front of you. They may be taking on increasing responsibilities in managing the office



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that affect the timing of your evaluation and diagnosis.

## **SAY THANK YOU**

Nurses typically strive to provide patient care without the need for any recognition, but we all know how a kind word can brighten any day. Organize events to show your appreciation for health care

workers. This might mean catering a lunch, signing them up for a spa day or giving gift cards.

Volunteer to help with things like running errands or childcare. Your local government, community or religious leaders may be willing to create something on an even larger scale. Any gesture, large

or small, will go a long way in showing how much you appreciate the sacrifices made to keep us all healthy and happy.

## **BE AN ADVOCATE**

Learn more about the challenges nurses face through information provided by various nursing and health care

associations.

Reach out to friends and family who work in nursing to find out whether there are specific needs to be addressed. Then support legislation and policies that benefit health care professionals such as nurses. Support nonprofits working on their behalf, as well.

# Adapting to Change

The challenges are many for nurses, who must deal with evolving strains of disease, staffing issues and complex technology, among many other things.

Increased health care collaboration and managing telehealth appointments provide daily challenges.

That's why it's so important for nursing professionals to remain flexible in their practice. They must adopt a growth mindset that fosters continual learning and helps them more effectively navigate the new challenges that are ahead.

Here's a look at the ways nurses are adapting to change:

## TECHNOLOGY

Nurses have to be open and accepting of seemingly ever-changing technological advancements. They regularly incorporate new innovations into their daily practices that help with everything from tracking health outcomes to remote patient visits. Electronic health records have significantly improved patient care by streamlining the paperwork process. Digital systems now track medical histories, offer a place to add real-time notes on progress and alert health care providers to possible medication interactions and allergies.



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## COLLABORATION

As health issues change or progress, nursing staff often must quickly integrate with others to provide continuing care, including various specialists, administrative assistants and visiting physicians.

Nurses maintain a career-long commitment to professionalism while working alongside diverse and rotating teams of colleagues.

## DOCUMENTATION

Precise documentation creates accurate medical histories. Now available online, this data feeds into future assessments. Some facilities are integrating wearable technology for patients, so nurses must become proficient in tracking health data from smart sensors. Valuable information from these devices may include vital signs and exercise and dietary details. Nurses often must

explain the meaning behind the data with patients who might not understand the new technology.

Wearable technology can effectively alert users to potential health issues, but it can't replace the expertise and advice of medical professionals.

## LEARNING

Part of remaining proactive as a nurse involves staying

informed about best practices and anticipating potential changes across the broader health care landscape. Nurses are constantly pursuing continuous education and related certifications.

Many are active members of professional organizations and participate in relevant conferences. They foster collaboration with colleagues and take advantage of online resources.

# Becoming a Specialist

Specialized nurses are first-line defenders against infection and diseases.

Like the wider health care industry, the nursing profession is continually changing in response to medical needs. We see this evolution play out in more specialized roles for nurses. After becoming a registered nurse, many choose to seek certification in a range of specialties to provide more comprehensive support for their patients.

Here are some interesting niches in nursing:

## NEONATAL

Neonatal nurses are essential workers at intensive care units for infants who require specialized attention or who are at risk of complications. The conditions managed by neonatal nurses include premature birth, genetic disorders, congenital or cardiac disabilities and drug dependency, among others. Infants typically receive care until they are discharged from the hospital. In some cases, however, children need ongoing support from these critical specialists.

## DIALYSIS

Dialysis removes waste products from the blood of patients with kidney-related diseases. Dialysis nurses are responsible for operating the specialized equipment that cleanses the blood. They



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monitor vital signs before and after the procedure, while providing patients with important information about medications and aftercare.

## INFECTION CONTROL

Infection control nurses work to identify and manage infections, viruses and diseases. Their expertise is critical at hospitals, community health centers and clinics, where they implement

ever-evolving strategies to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

During the pandemic, infection control nurses played an essential role in case reporting. They serve as important patient advocates and ensure that health care facilities are hygienic and safe.

## INFORMATICS

Health care facilities

depend on complex communication systems and careful management of clinical data. Informatics nurses combine their expertise in nursing, information technology and computer science to improve quality of care, billing and record keeping.

One of their most important roles is developing medical data systems and applications that lead to improved patient outcomes.

## EDUCATOR

Interested in guiding the next generation of health care professionals? Many nurses take their clinical expertise into educational roles. As educators, they lead academic programs in traditional classroom settings or through practical training in clinical environments. Responsibilities include advising students, developing and accessing curricula and research activities.

# Considering Nursing School?

There's still a significant shortage of registered nurses in the U.S.

Those who are interested in studying to become a nurse will be filling a critical need in health care. It might not take as long as you think: Nursing degrees are typically completed in two to four years. Having an associate degree is the minimum requirement, but many potential employers prefer candidates with a bachelor's.

To practice as a registered nurse, you must successfully pass a special RN examination and then obtain a license in your state. Those who pursue board certification may need additional years of clinical experience. There are grants, loan programs and payment reduction and forgiveness options to consider, as well.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

There are lots of programs that can help finance a nursing education. There may be grants available, depending on where you eventually work. Consult with financial aid advisors at your chosen school to find out about specific opportunities. Johnson and Johnson sponsors a special search tool for assistance in finding scholarships and other forms of financial aid.

## AFTER YOU GRADUATE

If you've already graduated but are struggling with meeting



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student loan payments, explore reduced repayment or forgiveness options. Options like the National Health Service Corps' Loan Repayment Program are specifically designed to alleviate student debt for nursing professionals.

Loans may be reduced or forgiven after a certain number

of payments if you are employed at specific facilities or if you commit to working for two years in areas where there is a shortage of health care staff. Each of the programs has specific eligibility criteria, so thoroughly review the terms and conditions associated with each before signing on.

## LOAN FORGIVENESS

Nurses employed by non-profit organizations or government agencies may be eligible for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. This federal initiative forgives a portion of loans after a specific number of qualifying payments have been made. Some

private employers may provide other assistance.

The Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program can reduce up to 60% of your unpaid nursing student loans in exchange for two years of full-time employment. Longer commitments may lead to more benefits.

# How to Avoid Burnout

Practice self-care to balance out long hours of stress and complex situations.

Nurses are involved with so much of what happens in the health care system that burnout might seem inevitable. They're constantly dealing with potentially life-threatening situations while providing emotional support to patients and their families. That dedication to others can lead some nurses to overlook their own health.

Self-care is a fundamental need in this profession. Nurses need to prioritize themselves sometimes to maintain their ability to care for others. The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics goes so far as to state that self-care is a professional obligation.

## WHAT IS 'SELF-CARE'?

Self-care can directly address the adverse effects that go hand-in-hand with nursing — including chronic stress, depression, anxiety, fatigue, headaches and back pain. But what is self-care? The World Health Organization has defined self-care as “the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health care provider.” One recent survey found that 70 percent of nurses admitted to



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prioritizing patient care over their own well-being.

## ADDRESSING SPECIFIC NEEDS

The five core aspects of self-care include physical, spiritual, mental, personal and social dimensions. Some add medical and professional self-care. Embrace the specific self-care techniques that address your individual needs. That might mean attending

yoga sessions, establishing a new skincare routine or exploring creative outlets like music.

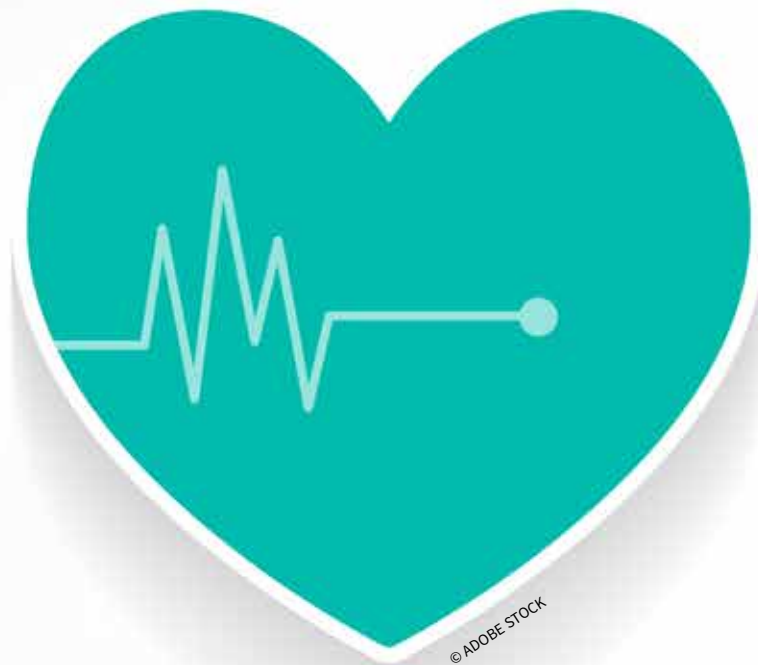
## STRATEGIES FOR NURSES

Practical suggestions include getting more exercise, balancing their diet, prioritizing sleep, practicing mindfulness and fostering more personal connections. Set achievable fitness goals,

whether that means reaching 10,000 steps daily and attending regular workout sessions or simply making active choices like taking stairs instead of elevators. Aim for a balanced diet rich in nutrients, and stay hydrated. Prepare healthy snacks and take advantage of any nutritious meal options available at your workplace.

Getting a good night's sleep can be challenging during

stressful times. Establish a new calming bedtime routine, create a tranquil sleeping environment and perhaps try aromatherapy. Engage in the present moment through techniques such as deep breathing, taking a nature walk or meditation. And remember, striking a work-life balance keeps you healthy. Nurture relationships with family and friends, enjoy social outings and engage in hobbies.



— HAPPY —  
NATIONAL  
NURSES  
WEEK  
— MAY 06 - 12 —

# The History of Nurses Week

National Nurses Week occurs every year from May 6 to May 12, culminating with legendary nurse Florence Nightingale’s birthday.

A pivotal figure in health care, Nightingale has been recognized as the founder of modern nursing. She implemented critical sanitation protocols in hospitals that reduced mortality rates by more than 50 percent. Previously, rates were seven times higher on the battlefield.

## **SPECIAL DAY BECOMES A WEEK**

National Nurses Week serves as vital

recognition of the contributions of nurses everywhere. The week traces its roots back to the early '50s — back when it was held in a different month. In 1954, “National Nurse Week” was celebrated from Oct. 11 to 16, marking the 100th anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s mission to Crimea in the early 1850s.

She led a team of 38 nurses who dramatically improved mortality rates among British soldiers by implementing her groundbreaking new sanitary procedures. Nightingale then created the foundation of modern nursing in 1860 when she established a nursing school at St Thomas Hospital in London.

In 1974, the International Council of

Nurses declared May 12 as “International Nurse Day.” In February of the same year, the White House designated a week in May as “National Nurse Week,” with a proclamation issued by President Richard Nixon. In 1982, the American Nurses Association’s board of directors formally acknowledged May 6 as “National Nurses Day,” following a joint resolution from the U.S. Congress, which established it as “National Recognition Day for Nurses.”

In 1998, May 8 was designated as National Student Nurses Day, to be observed each year. National School Nurse Day has been celebrated on the Wednesday of National Nurses Week since 2003.

## **CELEBRATING IN 2025**

The theme for National Nurses Week 2025, as chosen by the American Nurses Association and other organizations, is “The Power of Nurses to Transform Health.”

The Canadian Nurses Association and American Organization of Nurse Leaders also celebrate National Nurses Week.

The 2025 theme for the American Association of Colleges of Nursing is “Courage to Soar.” International Nurses Day is celebrated on May 12, the anniversary of Nightingale’s birth. The International Council of Nurses organizes celebrations, and 2025’s theme is “Caring for Nurses Strengthens Economies.”

# On the Night Shift

The responsibilities are the same — but there are still new challenges.

Working the night shift as a nurse can require considerable adjustments if your career has thus far been limited to daytime shifts. It's not just a shift in sleep patterns — though acclimating to a new schedule can pose its own challenges. The nature of emergencies you'll encounter is likely to differ.

Whether you are a newly appointed nurse or a seasoned professional transitioning to the night shift, here are a few tips to smooth out your transition:

## SLEEP SCHEDULE

Obviously, one of the biggest changes associated with night shifts is adapting to a daytime sleep routine. But you'll need to prioritize getting your rest both for optimal work performance and overall well-being. Experts recommend that night shift nurses create and maintain a consistent bedtime and wake schedule — even on weekends.

If you're having trouble sleeping during the day, avoiding alcohol or caffeinated beverages nearing bedtime may prove beneficial. Consider using earplugs and a sleep mask to block out the day's light and sound. Install light-blocking window coverings to prevent the sun from lighting up your sleeping space.

## HEALTHIER DIET

If you're looking to boost your stamina and energy levels, be sure to eat appropriate foods prior to your shift. Go with smaller, lighter meals rather than larger ones throughout the workday, since feeling bloated and full can be particularly challenging during a night shift. Rethink your snacks, too. Pack items such as nuts, raw salads, fresh vegetables and fruits to ensure a balanced diet — and for quick bursts of energy.

Consider making other changes to your weekly shopping and meal planning too, including granola bars, gluten-free breads, dried fruits and sugar-free flavored water. Keep everything in a place that's easily accessible during your shift. That will help you avoid sugar-laden snacks and caffeine when you need a quick energy boost.

## MONITOR HEALTH CHANGES

Medical professionals have determined that those working night shifts may be at increased risk for conditions such as high blood pressure, insomnia, diabetes and daytime drowsiness. If you notice a decline in your health after changing shifts, schedule a checkup.

