

# Why Choose a Nurse Practitioner?

- Nurse Practitioners provide patients with the information they need to make decisions about their own health.
- NPs take the time to listen to patients' concerns, health and otherwise.
- NPs concentrate on preventative health care.
- NPs provide individualized, holistic (all encompassing) care.

# What is a Nurse Practitioner?

A Nurse Practitioner (NP) is a registered nurse (RN) with advanced training in diagnosing and treating illness. Nurse Practitioners prescribe medications, treat illness, and administer physical exams. NPs differ from physicians in that they focus on prevention, wellness, and education. NPs specialize in providing all encompassing individualized care. Most NPs specialize in particular areas of health care. Many NPs work in primary & acute care settings including:

- Adult Health
- Family Health
- Pediatric Health
- Neonatal Care
- School/College Health
- Geriatric Health
- Women's Health/ Midwifery
- Psychiatric/ Mental Health

# What Services Do NPs Provide?

- Obtain medical histories and perform physical examinations
- Provide immunizations and other preventative child care
- Diagnose and treat illnesses
- Identify, treat, and manage chronic diseases such as diabetes and arthritis
- Order and interpret diagnostic tests such as x-rays, blood work, and EKG's
- Prescribe medications
- Prescribe physical therapy, massage therapy, and other rehabilitation therapy
- Provide education to allow patients to make decisions about their own health
- Perform procedures such as suturing, casting, cryotherapy, and skin biopsy
- Refer to other health care providers

# Where Do Nurse Practitioners Work?

Since their inception in the 1960's, Nurse Practitioners have been overcoming barriers to health care. They specialize in providing health care to under-served populations. This allows NPs to practice in a variety of settings both urban and rural including:

- Private Offices
- Walk-in clinics
- Community Clinics
- Health Departments
- School/College Clinics
- Hospitals
- Home Health Care Agencies
- Nursing Homes
- Health Maintenance Organizations

## How much schooling is required to become an NP?

Becoming an NP generally requires a Master's Degree in Nursing, a Master's of Science or a Doctorate of Nursing Practice. Normally, someone who wants to be an NP will first attend an undergraduate school of nursing, where they will be awarded a Baccalaureate degree in nursing, and also obtain licensure as a registered nurse. They then generally work for a period of two or more years prior to their entry into an NP program. The NP program itself will vary in length from 2-3 academic years, depending on the nature of the program and the school which is chosen.

## What are job conditions like for NPs?

The conditions on the job vary based on the type of specialty that the NP practices in. With the exception of Acute Care NP and Neonatal NP, which are usually hospital-based practices, and which may require rotating shifts to provide coverage in the hospital during days, evenings and nights, or which may require being on-call to go into the hospital, the majority of NP positions are ambulatory care positions, where the NP works in an outpatient setting seeing their patients. The settings however, can be quite varied, and may include doing house calls in rural areas to a standard pediatric or family practice office, such as most of us are familiar with.