

# 2021-2022 Health Care Careers

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# Types of Nursing Careers

Nurses are the heroes of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. If you're thinking of a career in nursing, there are many kinds of nurses out there to choose from. Here are just a few of the ways you can make a difference in the health care field.

## REGISTERED NURSE

Registered nurses are the backbone of the nursing field. Armed with an associate degree or a bachelor's degree, these nurses provide and coordinate patient care, education patients and the public about health conditions and provide advice and support to both patients and family members. RNs work as a team with doctors and other health care specialists.

## CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETIST

These trained nurses specialize in helping with anesthesia. They need a master's degree in nursing as well as the RN and one year in an acute care setting. CRNAs are some of the highest-paid nurses in the field, making more than \$150,000, on average.

## ER NURSE

In your worst moments, these are the

nurses you most want to see. They're RNs that specialize in emergency care, including the evaluation and stabilization of a patient and tending to wounds and ailments. This is the ideal job for you if you like adrenaline and would like to tend to a wide variety of injuries and ailments under a great deal of pressure.

## CARDIAC NURSE

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States, and this job field is on the rise accordingly. Cardiac nurses assist with heart-related procedures such as bypasses and pacemaker surgeries. This job requires an associate degree or bachelor's degree and a registered nursing license.

## GERIATRIC NURSING

As some of America's biggest generations get older, this field is expected to grow upwards of 30%. Geriatric nurses specialize in the treatment of older patients and their unique conditions, such as cancer or Alzheimer's disease. To be a geriatric nurse, you'll need an associate or bachelor's degree and be an RN.

## NURSE EDUCATOR

Finally, it takes one nurse to teach more nurses. Nurse educators are RNs that have taken the extra step to earn a master's degree.

They teach students how to be a nurse and may even focus on specific areas of nursing.

# Midwives Care for Moms and Babies

Maternal care is shifting from a model that centers on doctors and hospitals to a more nurturing relationship between a woman and her midwife.

Midwives build relationships with their patients and consider pregnancy and labor as a part of normal life rather than a medical condition to be managed.

## A NEW GENERATION OF CARE

For younger parents, the midwifery model may be more attractive than giving birth under a doctor's care.

"We have a generation of consumers who are socialized that they should have a voice in making decisions about their own healthcare," professor and midwife Saraswathi Vedam told Healthline. "In previous generations, it was more normative to give control about health care decisions to the provider."

## TYPES OF MIDWIVES

There are four kinds of midwives. All have different levels of education and background.

Certified nurse midwives have completed nursing school and have an additional graduate degree in midwifery. They can work in all birth settings, including home births, birthing centers and in hospi-



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tals. They can also write prescriptions in all 50 states and provide other primary and reproductive health care.

Certified midwives have the same training as CNMs, but come from a background other than nursing. They're only licensed in a few states at this time. Traditional midwives may be unlicensed but

still serve families, largely in home settings. Their training and background may vary and they may service specific, isolated communities.

Certified professional midwives work outside hospitals. They attend births in homes and birth centers. CPMs have completed coursework, an apprenticeship and a national

certification exam. They can practice in 33 states.

## IS IT SAFE?

Midwifery care in the United States is very safe. Research shows that mothers under the care of midwives are less likely to have C-sections, episiotomies and other surgical birth interven-

tions. These mothers are also more likely to breastfeed and less likely to experience perineal lacerations during birth. Families under the care of midwives report a high degree of satisfaction with their care.

In addition to attending births, midwives also provide reproductive care for women without children.

# Home Health Aides

With an American population that's skewing older, the demand for home health care is on the rise. Home health aides help today's seniors stay at home longer, providing long-term care in the home.

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a spike in the number of home health aides, expecting the field to expand 36% by 2028.

## WHAT DO HOME HEALTH AIDES DO?

Home health aides must meet certain training requirements, depending on what state you're in. They may live with their patients and work with them in regular shifts. Home health aides help patients with routine chores, such as laundry and cooking. They must be able to help patients with other activities as well, including bathing and eating. Home health aides must also be able to check vital signs and interpret what they mean, monitor the patient's physical and mental conditions and handle emergencies.

## OTHER TYPES OF AIDES

Sometimes, other kinds of aides are lumped in with home health aides but are really separate categories of caregivers. These include companions,



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which may include preparing meals and housekeeping duties, doing shopping and running errands, escorting the patient to doctor's appointments. Companions need no certification or license, whereas home health aides must have at least 75 hours of training through a state-approved program and at least 16 hours of hands-on practical and clinical

training.

Personal care aides do the same thing as companions but also assist with more personal care, such as bathing and using the bathroom. Training requirements for personal care aides vary from state to state, but may include clinical training.

Certified nursing assistants are a step up, performing all

the same tasks as companions, personal care aides and home health aides. They can also help with medical procedures, such as performing basic wound care or inserting catheters. These professionals have at least 75 hours of training as required by federal law, including 16 hours of clinical training. Most states, however, exceed that, with some requiring as

many as 180 hours of training.

## SIGNS YOUR LOVED ONE MAY NEED HELP

There are several signs that your loved one may need help at home. These include wandering away from home, leaving the stove on, not eating regularly, not bathing regularly, falling frequently or having difficulty walking without help.

# Taking Care of Teeth

There's more to dentistry than just cleaning and pulling teeth. Dental school graduates today have many career paths, including working in hospital emergency rooms, research, teaching or traveling the world helping restore the dental health of all kinds of people.

## PICKING A DENTAL SCHOOL

The first step toward a career in dentistry is earning a bachelor's degree, and then choosing a dental school. There are more than 65 dental schools in the U.S. accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation. These programs take four years to complete, but it may take longer for dental specialties such as pediatric dentistry. Graduates earn a doctoral degree in dental science or become a doctor of medicine in dentistry. Most dental schools accept a single online application through the American Association of Dental Schools Application Service.

## OTHER CAREERS

If that many years in school isn't for you, there are other



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dental jobs that may be attractive to you.

Dental hygienists work with the dentist to meet patients' oral health needs. States each have their own rules and regulations about what hygienists can do, but generally they:

- Screen patients and assess oral health conditions.
- Take and develop dental X-rays.
- Remove hard and soft deposits from the teeth.
- Apply preventative seal-

ants and fluorides to the teeth.

- Teach patients to perform proper oral hygiene.
  - Counsel patients about good nutrition.
  - Make impressions of teeth.
  - Perform documentation and office management activities.
- Dental assistants work as part of a dental care team. They can:
- Assist the dentist in treatment procedures.
  - Take and develop X-rays.

• Take the patient's medical history and vital signs.

- Develop infection control protocols and sterilize instruments and equipment.
- Help patients feel comfortable before, during and after treatment.
- Teach appropriate oral hygiene.
- Take impressions.
- Perform office management duties.
- Communicate with both patients and suppliers.

Dental lab technicians work behind the scenes, working with a dental care team to create dentures, bridges, crowns, veneers, orthodontic appliances and splints, and other dental appliances. This field combines with the science of dentistry with the artistry and creativity of creating dental prosthetics.

All members of a dental care team are well-compensated and all of these careers offer flexibility.



# Careers in Mental Health

Mental illness is a silent epidemic in America. Under the weight of this scourge, there aren't enough mental health professionals to go around.

If you're considering a career in the health care field and want to become a beacon of hope for someone battling mental illness, consider one of these professions.

## COUNSELORS

Counselors work with patients to help them battle their mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety. They can work with individuals, families or groups in different settings to help them overcome and live with their illnesses. Some counselors work strictly with addiction, helping their patients and their families to identify issues and establish treatment plans. Counselors can practice with either a master's or a bachelor's degree and make around \$40,000 per year.

## SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers help people who have mental health problems that affect their day-to-day lives. They typically don't diagnose or treat, but work to provide information and support to people managing mental health problems. Social workers can also be service



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managers that work with organizations to provide services and resources to those suffering from mental illness. Social workers usually have a bachelor's degree and make between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year.

## PSYCHOLOGISTS

Clinical psychologists and neuropsychologists diagnose and treat people suffering with mental and behavioral disorders. Neuropsychologists are generally more research-ori-

ented and focus on the physical brain during certain neurological events. Clinical psychologists are trained in multiple treatments, including different kinds of therapies and may also conduct research. These highly trained specialists usually have a doctorate and can make upwards of \$70,000 per year.

## PSYCHIATRISTS

Psychiatrists diagnose and treat patients suffering from

emotional and behavioral problems. Unlike others on this list, psychiatrists can prescribe drugs to treat mental health conditions. Psychiatric technicians work with psychiatrists to monitor patients, administer treatments and medicines and help patients perform their everyday tasks. A psychiatrist holds a professional medical degree and makes more than \$150,000 per year. Psychiatric technicians usually earn some sort of postsecond-

ary certificate and make around \$30,000 per year.

## NURSING

Nurses who work in mental health are RNs or advanced practice nurses who work with psychiatric patients. Their job duties include assessing patients' medical needs, diagnosing and treating them. Substance abuse nurses help those struggling with addiction, providing emotional support and medical assistance.

# Epidemiology, Contact Tracing



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The coronavirus brought us more than social distancing and fashion-forward face coverings. It brought an increased focus on epidemiology, the branch of medicine which deals with the incidence, distribution and control of diseases. It also brought a whole new career: contact tracing.

## WHAT DO EPIDEMIOLOGISTS DO?

Epidemiologists gather health information pertaining to diseases or frequency of factors that influence health, analyzing data and disseminating the findings. They find work as university faculty, in research, in public health settings, government agencies, in private industries and with nonprofits.

## HOW DO YOU BECOME ONE?

Epidemiologists typically hold graduate degrees, either in public health or in science. They can also earn a Ph.D. and focus on research projects and managing research teams. No matter what degree you get, epidemiology is a growing field. These trained specialists' skills at designing studies and managing data fit in a variety of occupational settings.

## HOW MUCH DO THEY MAKE?

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the median annual salary for epidemiologists was \$76,230. Salary depends on lots of things, including degrees earned, experience, industry and geographic location.

## CONTRACT TRACING

Contract tracing is a normal part of investigating public health, but it's gotten more attention as the COVID-19 pandemic has raged on. Contact tracing

is working with the patient diagnosed with an infectious disease to identify and support people who may have been infected through close contact with that patient.

Contact tracers are health professionals, but they don't require any special licensure. They reach out to people exposed to a disease and provide health education and guidance to help head off any further disease transmission. Contract tracers may provide instructions for testing and quarantine or arrange for clinical and other services for the patient or potential patients.

These people are organized and detail-oriented. They take action quickly and can manage large volumes of data and documentation. As contract tracers deal with patients and potential patients, they follow designated scripts and comply with their health department's policies and procedures. They must also follow all regulations regarding confidentiality and data security.

If you're interested in becoming a contact tracer, you should have:

- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- The ability to be non-judgmental and non-confrontational, especially when working with culturally diverse populations.
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

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# Careers in Medical Equipment

Durable medical equipment is any medical equipment used in the home to help a patient to live a better life.

Most insurances, including Medicare and Medicaid, cover durable medical equipment. Some examples of durable medical equipment include nebulizers, catheters, hospital beds, ventilators, canes and walkers, and wheelchairs.

To qualify as durable medical equipment, the equipment must provide a therapeutic benefit to a patient, be prescribed by a licensed provider, not serve as a comfort or convenience item and the item should not have significant non-medical uses.

## CAREERS IN DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

The durable medical equipment industry includes people who make, sell and service durable medical equipment. There are career opportunities all along the way in this growing field. If you enjoy working with the public, have strong communication skills and want to improve people's quality of life, this might be the career for you.

### WORK IN SALES

DME salespeople help show durable medical equipment to patients and their families. But it's not like sell-



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ing other items. You'll need some medical knowledge. You might be called upon to present to pharmacists, doctors and medical directors. Knowledge of specific disease conditions will also help. Durable medical equipment sales staff often specialize in equipment that tailor to specific conditions, such as insulin pumps. Companies might ask you

to complete extensive training programs in order to not only sell but also service their products. You may also be asked to conduct market research on behalf of your company in order to help make sure you have the right equipment for your area.

### WORK IN SERVICE

Medical equipment is sensitive and can be incredibly

complex. Technicians must be willing to complete training on a company's products and, because durable medical equipment is critical to patients' lives, be willing to work overtime, nights and weekends, if required. Durable medical equipment can also be heavy, so if you're looking to become a technician, you should be able to lift heavy eights.

Some things, such as providing and maintaining oxygen equipment, may require strict reporting and licensing requirements. So you should also be able to think critically and keep good records. You will also be called upon to teach the patient how to properly use their equipment and keep themselves safe, so you should be comfortable working with the public.