

# Do I need extra training?

# What practice nurses say

# Nursing in General Practice



No, you don't need to undertake a specific post basic program to work in general practice. Nurses have a range of skills and knowledge they use in any health care setting. These skills include patient assessment, health care planning and evaluation as well as the ability to provide health care interventions.

A National Resource is available to provide information and orientation for nurses new to general practice. The breadth of presentations in general practice may require nurses to extend their scope of practice and support is available to access education and training.

"Because it's a holistic approach to health care. You see patients regularly. You see their families growing up, you look after their parents, grandparents, you know the kids. That's what I love about it. It is a family approach to medicine really." Nurse#1

"Being involved in patient care. I really enjoy it, and there is a good balance between primary and emergency care." Nurse #2

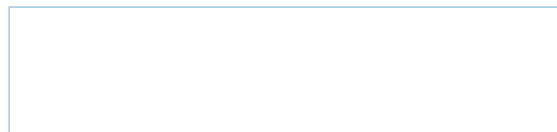
"(GPs) have started to send patients along (to me) for some reflective listening, goal setting, talking about nutrition, giving out information and physical exercise." Nurse#3

Prepared by the  
Australian General Practice Network.

*Promoting community health and wellbeing through  
the General Practice Network and primary care teams.*

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**To find out more about Nursing in General Practice  
contact your local office of the Australian General  
Practice Network**



## Information for nurses

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# Nursing in general practice is a dynamic and vibrant area of the nursing profession.

In a general practice you will be a core member of general practice teams, providing significant benefits to the provision of primary health services. Nurses are often central to developing and maintaining team relationships within general practice. Over 57% of general practices across Australia employ one or more practice nurses.

## How nurses contribute

Recognised benefits nurses can bring to general practice services include:

- improved outcomes in chronic disease
- an increase in the range of services available at the practice
- reduction in waiting times
- improved public access
- improved integration with the acute sector
- enhanced consumer satisfaction.

## Dynamic nursing

Nursing in general practice provides an opportunity for you to be at the heart of the community.

Both registered and enrolled nurses are employed in general practice, playing pivotal roles in health promotion, maintenance of health and the prevention of illness.

The roles for nurses in general practice are diverse and can vary from practice to practice depending on patient needs, the skills and experience of the nurse, and the requirements of the practice.

Some of the common duties undertaken by nurses in general practice include: triage, health assessments, wound management, immunisation, first aid, administering medications, blood collection, taking patient histories, care planning and reminder and recall of patients. Many nurses are also involved in specialist roles including patient education and monitoring for diseases such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and women's health checks.

Nurses play a key role in coordinating patient care, advocating on behalf of patients, liaising with community groups, and assisting patients to navigate the health system.

## Support available

Australian Government policy has been a significant driver for the employment of more nurses in general practice and for the development of the clinical role for the nurse. It has made a significant financial commitment to practice nursing providing funding of \$104.3 million in the years 2001-2005, and a further \$129.7 million for 2005-2009.

This support includes:

- incentive grants to practices to assist in the employment of a nurse
- medicare items for the service of nurse provided for and on behalf of a GP
- funding for education and training including practice nurse scholarships.

The Australian General Practice Network provides significant support programs for practice nurses through its local branches across Australia. This support includes orientation into general practice, regular opportunities for networking with other practice nurses, and access to ongoing education and training and professional support.

## Other benefits

- Flexible working arrangements with little or no shift work.
- Working as a valued member of a small team.
- Ability to be self directed and utilise many skills.
- Opportunity to specialise in areas of interest.
- Access to a range of postgraduate programs designed specifically for general practice nurses.

