

What is a Nurse Practitioner?

A nurse practitioner (NP) is a registered nurse (RN) who has completed advanced education (a minimum of a master's degree) and training in the diagnosis and management of common medical conditions, including chronic illnesses. Nurse Practitioners provide a broad range of health care services. NP can serve as a patient's regular health care provider. Because the profession is state regulated, care provided by NPs varies. Nurse Practitioner's duties include the following:

- Counseling and educating patients on all areas of health
- Diagnosing and treating acute illnesses, infections, and injuries
- Diagnosing, treating, and monitoring chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes, high blood pressure)
- Obtaining medical histories and conducting physical examinations
- Ordering, performing, and interpreting diagnostic studies (e.g., lab tests, x-rays, EKGs)
- Prescribing medications
- Prescribing physical therapy and other rehabilitation treatments
- Providing family planning services
- Providing health maintenance care for adults, including annual physicals

The core philosophy of the field is individualized care.