

Title:

Career Decisions: Licensed Practical Nurses

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372

Summary:

Licensed Practical Nurses provide the most amount of direct patient care within the nursing category of healthcare. If you're interested in a healthcare career dealing directly with patients, becoming an LPN is a rewarding opportunity.

Keywords:

nursing degrees, types of nursing degrees

Article Body:

Licensed Practical Nurses provide the most amount of direct patient care within the nursing category of healthcare. If you're interested in a healthcare career dealing directly with patients, becoming an LPN is a rewarding opportunity.

Licensed Practical Nurses are mainly responsible for direct patient care. Nurses' aides and others assist LPNs in some of the duties they perform. LPNs take their direction from doctors and registered nurses (RNs) and nurse managers. Typically, an LPN is responsible for taking vitals signs, administering injections, application of bandages and dressings, and the monitoring of patients. Work duties can also include feeding patients, collecting samples and providing patient hygiene. LPNs work in a variety of settings like hospitals, outpatient facilities, long-term care facilities, clinics and home care. LPNs with many years of experience may supervise nursing aides and assistants.

Nursing jobs are generally in high demand across the country, but LPN positions in hospitals are declining. LPN positions in long term care facilities however, are in as much demand as other nursing categories. Home healthcare is also another area where LPN's are in great demand. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (<http://www.bls.gov/>) the median income for LPNs was \$31,440 in 2002. The range was \$22,860 to \$44,040 based on geographic setting and job knowledge. Contract LPNs made the most money, while doctor's office nurses made the least on average at \$28,710. Nursing jobs offer not only good pay, but also flexible schedules. Nurses often work only three 12-hour shifts, which allow them four days off. Nursing candidates are also offered tuition reimbursement and signing bonuses.

How to become a nurse? You will need education and a nursing license. Graduates must complete a state approved practical nursing program and pass a licensing examination. An LPN certificate can be accomplished in less than a year. Some RN students become LPNs after finishing their first year of study. Course work in the LPN program includes physiology, chemistry, obstetrics, pediatrics nutrition, biology, anatomy, first aid and nursing classes. Becoming an LPN is the fastest path to a nursing career. If you have the qualities required to be a nurse and want a well paying job, getting an LPN degree in nursing is a great way to secure your professional future.