

How to Choose the Perfect Nursing Specialty

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Once you have become comfortable with the day-to-day practice of an RN, you might decide to take the next step and get your nursing specialization. However, like any major career move, picking a specialty can take time, research, and a bit of soul-searching.

Why pick a specialization? There are many benefits to choosing a nursing specialty including the possibility of a higher salary, more employment opportunities, and greater respect in the field. Although these perks seem exciting, it's important to pick the right specialization for you.

Here are a few tips for choosing a nursing specialty.

Analyze Your Personality and Interests

There are more than 100 nursing specialties, and each comes with its own pace and environment. It's important to choose one that compliments you and the way you work. For nurses who thrive on an adrenaline rush, a trauma center or ER might be the right specialty. On the other hand, for nurses who are detail-oriented and meticulous, a career in clinical research might be a great fit. For nurses who love children or have an interest in nutrition, there are nursing specialties that allow them to combine many kinds of personal interests with their career.

Determine Your Favorite Aspects of Being a Nurse

What do you like about your job? Some nurses love meeting new people every day. Others like seeing the same patients for years in a physician's office or clinic. Some enjoy "fixing" things, like bandaging a wound or ensuring someone gets medication for an infection. Consider which nursing specialty will let you perform the tasks you like best.

Find Your Comfort Zone

If you've never liked visiting hospitals, guess what? You don't have to work in one. As a nurse, you have the opportunity to work in all kinds of places, including private practices, universities, and even large corporate offices. More than 30 nursing specialties let you work outside of a hospital environment. For example, you might like working as a geriatric nurse in a nursing home or as a pediatric nurse in a small pediatrician's office. Your comfort zone is key to choosing a specialty.

Research the Requirements

Most importantly, do some research and find out how much schooling is required for your specialties of interest. For most, this can be a deciding factor in choosing which specialty to pursue or not pursue. Some choose to postpone a specialty based on how many extra years of schooling and the cost. If you are still unsure upon graduation, you should work as an RN until you find the specialty that impassions you. Getting some RN experience under your belt before chasing after a specialty provides the extra funding, the extra time, and the extra research to find the perfect specialization for you. Once you're interested in a specialty, visit one of the following websites to learn more about the qualifications for certification:

- [Nursing Certification Board by Specialty](#)
- [Campaign for Nursing's Future](#)

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