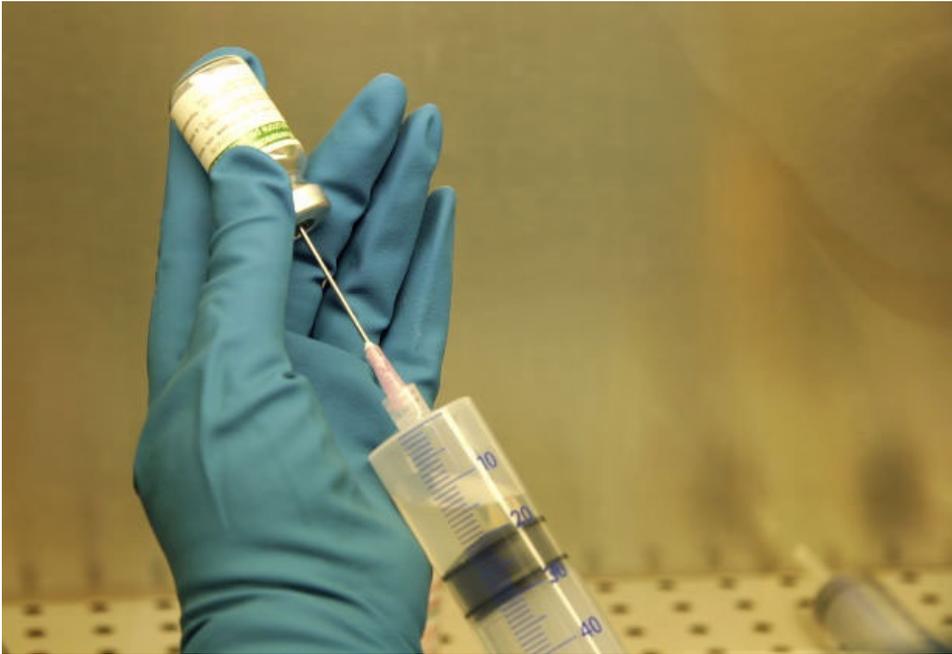


ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BECOMING A NURSE

Summary: Learn more about the field of nursing, its future, and the advantages and disadvantages that await those who enter.



Question: I'm considering a career in nursing. Could you describe the profession and point out the advantages and disadvantages of this career?

Answer: Nurses work in a variety of health-care settings to promote health and help patients cope with illness. Their work includes such roles as caregiver, advocate and health educator. Hospital nurses make up the largest group of nurses but there are also office nurses, home-health nurses, public health nurses and industrial nurses. At the advanced levels are positions such as nurse practitioner and certified nurse-midwife.

Advantages

- Many nurses find providing direct care for patients extremely meaningful and rewarding work.
- According to the "Occupational Outlook Handbook", employment of registered nurses is expected to grow faster than average for all occupations, and many new jobs will result.
- Earning potential is a positive feature with the median annual earnings of registered nurses very high relative to average salaries for American workers, with additional earnings potential for advanced-practice nurses ("Occupational Outlook Handbook").

Disadvantages

- A stressful health-care climate, with mergers and reorganizations, is stretching nursing staff thin and increasing demands on the job.
- Nursing is often physically challenging, with hours of standing and moving patients. Exposure to disease is a risk inherent to the setting. Nursing can be emotionally challenging, as well, coping continually with human suffering.
- Many times nursing professionals are called on to work nights, weekends, and holidays.

Before making a decision, consider the extent to which your own personal qualities and values fit the profession. There's no better source of information than nurses themselves, so talk directly to nurses employed in a variety of settings to obtain the "real-life" perspective. Check www.NursingCrossing.com for additional resources and nursing job opportunities.

- See **5 Unusual Jobs You Can Get with a Nursing Degree** for more information.