



Becoming an IV Nurse: Everything You Need to Know about Working as an IV Nurse

By Robin Salisian

In this article, you'll learn about the qualifications required to become an IV nurse — which include the right education and certification — as well as about the typical responsibilities of an IV nurse, such as assisting doctors and recording patients' medical histories.



While most of you rang in the New Year with friends and family, I rang it in with tonsillitis. That's right, when midnight struck, I was lying miserably on a couch, unable to do much of anything. Where am I going with this? Well, because of my tonsillitis, I spent three nights in the hospital. I had my blood taken. I was waited on round the clock by nurses. And I was hooked up to an IV. Nurses were my lifesaver.

One particular nurse that I remember well was the head IV nurse. During my first night in the hospital, I had to receive antibiotics through an IV. A nurse came into my room. Three needle pokes later, however, and the IV wouldn't go in. She called another nurse, but *she* couldn't do it either. Sick and in pain, I desperately wanted this to end. One more nurse was called in. And thankfully, with one prick of the needle, the IV slipped right in. Thank goodness for the head IV nurse.

So what does an IV nurse do? According to the [Massachusetts General Hospital](http://www.massgeneral.org/pcs/nursing/Cent_IV.asp) [http://www.massgeneral.org/pcs/nursing/Cent_IV.asp] website, their IV nurse team "provides competent, compassionate IV care to adults, elders, and children. IV care includes placement/maintenance of PICC/midline catheters, blood administration, and peripheral IV insertion. The IV nurse is also utilized as a resource for phlebotomy for patients with limited venous access."

But what does it take to become an IV nurse? There are many qualifications needed, including the right education and certification, as well as numerous responsibilities required, such as assisting doctors, recording clients' medical histories, and inserting IVs.

What Are the Qualifications Needed to Become an IV Nurse? Required Education and Certification of an IV Nurse

You can begin your nursing career as a nursing assistant before advancing to become a licensed practical nurse, which requires "a one-year course of study from a vocational school or junior college," according to [studentdoc.com](http://www.studentdoc.com/become-a-nurse.html) [http://www.

studentdoc.com/become-a-nurse.html]. However, becoming a registered nurse is important. This requires either a two-year degree, called the ADN (for "associate degree nurse"), or a four-year degree, which is a BSN (for "bachelor's of science nurse"). According to the same site, many more people are investing in the four-year degree because hospitals will pay more for the higher degree of education.

To become a registered nurse, you must pass the NCLEX examination, a nursing test administered by each state. However, before you can take the test, you must first have completed a state-approved nursing program, according to [allnursingschools.com](http://www.allnursingschools.com/faqs/be_rn.php) [http://www.allnursingschools.com/faqs/be_rn.php]. And like many other professionals, nurses are encouraged and even required by some states to continue their educations as they practice nursing.

The final step in becoming an IV nurse is to be IV certified. According to ivcertification.com [http://ivcertification.com/], there are three ways you can obtain your IV certification.

- Hands-on workshop
 - In-depth lectures
 - Hands-on practice sessions
 - Latest equipment
- Online exam
- Home study program
 - After studying on your own, you can call up your local proctor to set up an appointment to perform the duties necessary to become certified.

Other qualifications of an IV nurse include having a calm demeanor and showing compassion for people. Why? Because as an IV nurse, you will work with all kinds of people in all kinds of situations. According to the [bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov/ocos083.htm) [http://www.bls.gov/ocos083.htm] website, "[Nurses] need emotional stability to cope with human suffering, emergencies, and other stresses."

You also have to be flexible and willing to work unusual hours. When I had nurses watching me round the clock, some of their shifts began at 7pm and lasted until 7am. However, there is a benefit to these long shifts: you might work only a three-day work week.



Nursing Job Profile

The Responsibilities of an IV Nurse Include Providing Emotional Support to Family Members, Recording Patients' Medical Histories, and Helping Perform Diagnostic Tests

The responsibilities of an IV nurse, like those of an RN, are numerous. One answers.yahoo.com [http://answers.yahoo.com/] blogger who answered the question, "Can someone tell me the real deal [about what an RN does]?" replied that "RNs do everything — I mean everything — except the surgery itself and diagnosis. I used to be a surgery tech. Doctors are the divas and RNs do everything, and, yes, you have to insert [catheters] and other objects into people's bodies."

So what does "everything" consist of? According to the aforementioned bls.gov website, RN nurses treat patients, provide emotional support to family members, "record patients' medical histories and symptoms, help perform diagnostic tests and analyze results, operate medical machinery, administer treatment and medications, and help with patient follow-up and rehabilitation."

IV nurses, like RN nurses, help start, maintain, and

discontinue intravenous lines for fluid, medication, blood, and blood products, according to the same website.

What Is the Current Job Market for IV Nurses?

According to [bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos083.htm) [http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos083.htm], the "projected employment" number for RN nurses will be 3,092,000 by 2016, which is a 23% increase over the 2,505,000 in 2006. And on average, RN nurses currently make between \$54,489 and \$65,634 per year, according to [Salary.com](http://www.salary.com/) [http://www.salary.com/].

Final Thoughts

IV nurses must be personable, flexible, emotionally stable, and able to work well with others. As an IV nurse, you should expect numerous responsibilities, including everything from attending to patients and inserting IVs and catheters to recording medical histories. Receiving a four-year BSN degree is suggested, and becoming IV certified is essential to not only work as an IV nurse but to thrive in the industry and earn a competitive salary as well. Thankfully, the market for nurses will continue to grow through 2016 and beyond, giving hope to nurses everywhere.

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