

## Vocational Nursing as a Career

LVNs care for patients in many ways. Often, they provide basic bedside care. Many LVNs measure and record patients' vital signs such as height, weight, temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration. They also prepare and give injections and enemas, insert and monitor catheters, dress wounds, and many other procedures. To help keep patients comfortable, they assist with bathing, dressing, and personal hygiene, moving in bed, standing, and walking. They might also feed patients who need help eating. Experienced LVNs may supervise nursing assistants and aides.

As part of their work, LVNs collect samples for testing, perform routine laboratory tests, and record food and fluid intake and output. They clean and monitor medical equipment. Sometimes, they help physicians and registered nurses perform tests and procedures. Some LVNs help to deliver, care for, and feed infants.



LVNs also monitor their patients and report adverse reactions to medications or treatments. LVNs gather information from patients, including their health history and how they are currently feeling. They may use this information to complete insurance forms, pre-authorizations, and referrals, and they share information with registered nurses and doctors to help determine the best course of care for a patient.

LVNs often teach family members how to care for a relative or teach patients about good health habits.

Most LVNs are generalists and work in all areas of health care. However, some work in a specialized setting, such as a nursing home, a doctor's office, or in home health care. LVNs in nursing care facilities help to evaluate residents' needs, develop care plans, and supervise the care provided by nursing aides. In doctors' offices and clinics, they may be responsible for making appointments, keeping records, and performing other clerical duties. LVNs who work in home health care may prepare meals and teach family members simple nursing tasks.

In some States, LVNs are permitted to administer prescribed medicines, start intravenous fluids, and provide care to ventilator-dependent patients.



**Work environment.** Most licensed vocational nurses in hospitals and nursing care facilities work a 40-hour week, but because patients need round-the-clock care, some work nights, weekends, and holidays. They often stand for long periods and help patients move in bed, stand, or walk.

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