

What is a nurse practitioner?

A nurse practitioner (NP) is a licensed registered nurse (RN) with advanced education and experience who is qualified to assess, diagnose, and prescribe care, medication, and treatment to promote overall wellness and comfort to patients and their families. NPs are also referred to as advanced practice nurses. NPs begin their nursing career by becoming an RN and continue their education by earning a master's or doctoral degree in nursing. Many NPs choose to specialize in a particular area of health care. All NPs practice under the rules and regulations of the state in which they work, and they have a collaborative agreement with a physician. NPs have been treating patients for more than four decades, providing safe, cost-effective, and high-quality health care.

What is an oncology nurse practitioner?

The oncology NP specializes in caring for patients with cancer and hematologic disorders. Oncology NPs must take a national examination to become certified in the specialty, and subsequently they are licensed by their State Board of Nursing.

What does an oncology nurse practitioner do?

Oncology NPs work together with oncology physicians to provide care to patients and families facing a cancer diagnosis. They can see patients at the initial consultation and often see them for follow-up visits. They provide symptom management and psychosocial support, clarify information, provide education, and work with the cancer care team to provide patients and their families with the best care possible.

NPs have the education, experience and expertise to

- Work together with other healthcare professionals.
- Obtain a health history.
- Perform a physical examination.

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- Diagnose and treat many health problems and symptoms.
- Prescribe medications and other treatments.
- Order and interpret diagnostic tests such as lab work and x-rays and other radiology studies.
- Recommend or perform procedures such as biopsy, lumbar puncture, paracentesis, suturing, and thoracentesis.
- Lead cancer support groups and educational programs.
- Teach and counsel patients and families.

Oncology NPs work in many different settings, including

- Outpatient clinics
- Hospitals
- Office settings
- Nursing homes
- Hospices
- Community programs
- Cancer risk-assessment programs
- Survivorship clinics
- Case management
- Research and clinical trials
- Education
- Universities and colleges