



Pennsylvania's Nursing Exploration Patch

Criteria

The aging of America's baby boomers, and the increased demand for nurses in specialized areas of care have combined to create a serious need for nurses. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services predicts a shortfall of 635,000 to 1,754,000 nurses by 2020. The result is that the future for nurses has never looked brighter! Nursing is a profession that involves the use of your intelligence, skill, and compassion to make a difference in peoples' lives. Completing this interest project will increase your knowledge of the variety of career opportunities available in nursing and will increase your awareness of the growing need for nurses. Books, magazines, videos, Internet sites, nursing professionals, nursing schools, and nursing organizations are available as resources for this project.

For: Junior, Cadette, and Senior Girl Scouts

Purpose: To increase the knowledge of Girl Scouts concerning the variety of career opportunities available in the nursing profession, focusing on exploring the need for nurses, the many roles of nurses, education requirements, resources available for those pursuing careers in nursing as well as general health and wellness information.

Requirements: To earn this patch, Girl Scouts will complete at least one activity in each program area. The various activities suggested should be tailored to each particular age group. Girl Scouts and Troop Leaders should choose activities that are appropriate for each age group.

Career Exploration

- **Shadow a Nurse**—Contact your local hospital, doctor's office, health clinic, school nurse, camp nurse or any nurse you know, and ask if you can shadow them for a day or half day—whatever their schedule allows. Document all the activities you observe. If observation is not possible or age appropriate, consider having a nurse or nurses speak to a group of Girl Scouts or have the Girl Scout interview a nurse that she knows. The Girl Scout should then answer the following questions:
 - 1) What roles does the nurse perform?
 - 2) How does the nurse incorporate science and math into his or her roles?
 - 3) What kind of leadership, organizational, or decision-making skills does the nurse use in his or her position?
 - 4) Would you want to work as a nurse? Why or Why not?

- **Explore Nursing Variety**—Visit the websites that contain information about nursing, such as <http://www.PAHealthCareers.org>, <http://psna.org>, <http://www.discovernursing.com>, and <http://www.nursesource.org>. Review the information and identify at least five settings nurses can work; five areas of practice nurses can specialize in; and three different patient populations nurses can work with. Use the information obtained to create a poster, mobile, book, brochure, or advertisement about nursing using the information that you learned about nursing.
- **Do Research on a Famous Nurse**—Have the troop break up into groups to conduct research on a famous nurse, focusing on who the nurse was, what contributions they made to nursing and society, and how they influenced new ideas about health care delivery. Have each group make a report to the others in the troop.
- **Research Nursing Programs**—Research the various types of nursing programs offered in Pennsylvania, the types of degrees offered, and the entrance requirements. After finding this information, decide what school you would attend and what classes and/or other requirements you would need to get accepted into the school.
- **Visit a Nursing School**—Interview a Nursing Student, or a Nursing Instructor. Ask for a tour of the facility. Document your observations.
- **Research Nursing Scholarships**—Investigate scholarships available for students interested in attending Nursing School. What are the requirements? Who's eligible? Are there more scholarships offered for specialized areas of study? Do scholarships differ depending on the type of degree you are seeking or the type of school you attend? Document your findings.

Educational Lessons

- **Create Information on an Illness or Condition**—Put together a short information guide on a particular disease, condition, or illness, such as asthma, diabetes, cancer, or depression that could be shared with a patient or family. The emphasis should be on where to find additional information about the disease, condition, or illness and what resources exist in the community to help persons and families with the disease, illness, or condition learn more or get support.
- **Create Information on Health Promotion or Safety**—Design a poster, storyboard, or videotape depicting the importance of healthy behaviors—not smoking, weight control, immunizations, seat-belt use, or helmet-use or conduct an activity at a school or in the community that emphasizes health promotion or safety, such as a bike rodeo.
- **Proper Hand-Washing Technique**—Visit the website: <http://www.microbe.org> and learn the importance of proper hand-washing in general and in the health care setting. Design an activity to teach younger students how to properly wash their hands (i.e., have the students rub glitter on their hands and then wash them to see how well they can get the glitter off their hands). Have older students design a research project that could be performed to measure the impact of hand-washing behavior change.
- **Investigate Teen Drug Abuse**—Design a storyboard or story about the effects of drugs on the body.

- **Learn about Herbal Supplements**—Choose one herbal supplement that you can purchase at a store and find research to validate its safety or effectiveness, what adverse effects the supplement could have, and how it might interact with other medications.
- **Learn How a Body System Works**—As an individual or troop, select a body system and understand how that body system works. Use a nurse, health educator, or other health care provider to help in gaining that understanding.
- **Visit a Health Club or Recreation Center**—Visit a YMCA/YWCA, Boys & Girls Club or Health Club. Speak to a personal trainer. Ask how exercise contributes to health. Teach a friend or family member how to perform exercises you have learned or develop an exercise program for yourself and document what you did each day in a diary and how you felt after doing the exercise.

Skill Builders

- **Earn your CPR Certification**—Complete a certified cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) course offered by the Red Cross, American Heart Association, local hospital, fire department, or other certifying agency. There are various courses offered by the American Heart Association that can be selected for the various Girl Scout levels. The Heartsaver CPR Course is a modular course that teaches lay rescuers how to recognize and treat life-threatening emergencies, including cardiac arrest and choking for adult, child, and infant victims. Students also learn to recognize the warning signs of heart attack and stroke in adults and breathing difficulties in children. The program is divided into a choice of 3 different courses—one for all ages, one for adults, and one for infants and children. Visit the American Heart Association website at: <http://www.americanheart.org> to find a Basic Life Support Heartsaver Course (or any CPR course) near you or information on other CPR courses.
- **Earn First Aid Certification**—Contact the local American Red Cross to identify what courses or information can be shared with the various Girl Scout levels. For instance, the Basic Aid Training (B.A.T.) introduces 8–12-year-olds to the emergency action steps, check, call, care and to first aid procedures and an activity book with puzzles and games teaches children how to prevent injuries and what to do in an emergency. For other information, go to <http://www.redcross.org>.
- **Attend Babysitting "How To" Workshop**—The Babysitter's Training course provides youths ages 11-15, with the information and skills necessary to provide safe and responsible care for children in the absence of parents or guardians. This course is usually offered through your local Red Cross.

Service Projects

- **Participate in a Community Health Project**—(Cancer Walk, Blood Drives, Diabetes, Heart, Breast Cancer Walks, Screening, etc.). Find ways to participate, other than raising money. Help with registration, offer water, light luminaries, provide sun protection, etc. Write a brief statement of how the health project helped the community as well as what you learned about the illness/condition and how it impacts those who are coping with the disease.
- **Do a Project for a Health Care Facility**—Contact a doctor’s office, health clinic, hospital, retirement, or nursing center and find out what project might be done to meet a need in that organization. Examples might be collecting magazines for offices or residents, donating and taping books for use by the elderly or pediatric patients, collecting toys for donation to a pediatric unit, designing a “boredom” box with activities for patients who are hospitalized, decorating a nursing home unit for a holiday event, planning a special event for the residents of a nursing home, etc.
- **Volunteer Four (4) Hours in a Health Care Facility**—Volunteer your time in a doctor's office, health clinic, hospital, retirement or nursing center. Document your observations.

Technology

- **Learn about Equipment and Supplies Used by Nurses**—Nurses use lots of different equipment and supplies in caring for patients. Get a nurse to tell you about this equipment, how it works, and when it’s used. For some equipment, you may be able to try it yourself.

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