

Cardiac Care Nursing: What to Expect When Choosing this Field

Nurses who work in cardiac care are currently in very high demand. Due to the fact that heart disease is one of the main causes of death in the United States, there is a great need for nurses who specialize in cardiac care. Also, breakthroughs in both pharmaceuticals and technology have contributed to the advancement of cardiology, necessitating more nurses to specialize in cardiac care.

Cardiac care nurses work in various settings. Many cardiac care nurses choose the operating room in which to work while others prefer the recovery room. The cardiac rehabilitation unit in hospitals is also chosen by many nurses, as is a business office setting, where a nurse can offer support to those individuals who administer care to patients. Also, many nurses who have reached the advanced practice nurse level complete certification as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) in cardiology.

Cardiac Care Nurses: Treating Heart Disease

Heart disease is treated in a variety of ways, including bypass surgery, angioplasty and with pacemakers. A surgical cardiac care nurse will assist the doctor in all of these procedures. Other cardiac care nurses will work in the post operative setting, as a critical care nurse. They will regularly check the patient's vital signs, administer medication, and follow their progress until he or she is released from the hospital.

Once the cardiac patient is released from the hospital, they will still have a long road to recovery. There are cardiac nurses that visit patients at home to check on their health and monitor their progress. Most doctors will prescribe an exercise program for the cardiac patient to help strengthen the heart. The doctor will normally request that this exercise be conducted in a cardiac rehabilitation unit, so that a trained cardiac nurse will be available if the patient experiences any health problems while exercising.

Cardiac Care Nursing: Work Environment

In general, there are a variety of fields in nursing that are available to be pursued, even within cardiac nursing. For a nurse that has received specialized training in cardiac care, the career path is wide open. With the number of people in the United States suffering from heart disease, combined with the increasing nursing shortage, the numbers of nurses that are needed for cardiac rehabilitation will only increase.

If you are interested in becoming a cardiac care nurse, you can attend specialized training that would count toward your continuing education in cardiac specialties. Once you become a cardiac care specialist you will have the choice of working in the operating room, recovery, home health environment or in a fitness related setting.

Cardiac Care Nursing: Finding a Job

While there are many jobs available in cardiac care nursing, these opportunities are not available at every hospital. Because of the extensive nature of cardiac care, all hospitals do not offer cardiac services, except for emergency treatment. Cardiac care centers are often found in larger, regional health care centers. For those located close to one of these, finding a job in cardiac care should be more attainable for the well trained applicant.

One benefit of working in a large regional center is that you can specialize in the type of cardiac care that most interests you. For instance, if your main interest is the operating room, you can make arrangements to spend your shifts working there.

Cardiac care at smaller centers requires a more experienced nurse. Often, the operating room nurses handle all surgeries, and the patient will be released onto the critical care floor. If you do have training in cardiac care nursing, you can use your skills in a variety of ways, but it is unlikely that you will receive the level of on-the-job-training that you would in a large regional center.

Ultimately, the decision whether to work in a large cardiac care center or a smaller hospital is a matter of personal choice. Some individuals prefer the variety of working in a smaller hospital where you are required to have many skills, but with the knowledge that the more interesting cases will be transported out of your hospitals and the advancements in cardiac care will not reach your hospital for years.

Others prefer the atmosphere of a larger hospital, where you are expected to know one thing and know it well. If you are not sure which you prefer, talk to nurses that have worked in each and get a feel for the type of work environment each hospital provides.

About the Author

Stephanie Larkin is a freelance writer who writes about topics pertaining to nurses and the nursing profession such as [Nursing Scrubs](#)

