

Frequently Asked Questions about Nurse Practitioners

What is a Nurse Practitioner (NP)?

Nurse Practitioners are Masters and Doctorate-prepared advanced practice nurses who diagnose and treat diseases and health conditions, as well as educate and support patients who have health issues that range from simple to complex, and acute to chronic.

Where do Nurse Practitioners work in B.C.?

Nurse Practitioners work in both independent and collaborative practice roles in B.C. Nurse Practitioners practice in acute care, outpatient clinics, residential care, and community settings. Nurse Practitioners work in rural and urban communities across B.C. and provide health care services to patients of all ages who require acute, chronic or episodic care.

How are Nurse Practitioners regulated and licensed?

Nurse Practitioners' practice is regulated by the College of Registered Nurses of B.C. (CRNBC). The full scope of practice document for nurse practitioners can be viewed on the CRNBC website.

Do Nurse Practitioners collaborate with other health professionals?

Nurse Practitioners practice independently and in collaboration with other primary care providers in B.C. These primary care providers may include medical doctors including specialists, naturopathic doctors, chiropractors, physiotherapists, pharmacists, registered nurses and others.

What kinds of things can Nurse Practitioners do?

Examine you and diagnose common health problems:

- Give you a prescription
- Refer you to a specialist
- Order tests and interpret their results
- Screen for chronic disease
- Provide wellness care, health promotion and education

Are Nurse Practitioners supervised by doctors?

No, Nurse Practitioners work independently and are not supervised by doctors. However, as part of their education, Nurse Practitioners learn when and how to consult and work with other health care professionals. If your Nurse Practitioner feels that your care needs are beyond what they are trained to provide, he or she will refer you to a family doctor or specialist.

Is a Nurse Practitioner a doctor's assistant?

No, Nurse Practitioners are not assistants to doctors, nor are they second-level doctors.

What are the benefits of Nurse Practitioner?

Nurse Practitioners have been working in countries all over the world since the 1960s.

They provide many benefits to the health care system, including accessible care and cost-effectiveness. Research shows that people who see Nurse Practitioners about minor illnesses or injuries are just as healthy and satisfied with their care as people who saw a doctor.