

Nurse Practitioner

A nurse with a master's degree who can diagnose, order tests and prescribe. Two degrees, six figures, huge demand.

TYPICAL PAY

\$125,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$105k to \$145k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

8 to 9 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Primary care clinics, hospitals,
long-term care, northern nursing...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Grade 12 English, biology, chemistry and a math. Nursing admission is competitive.
- 2 BScN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing)** 4 years
A 4-year university nursing degree with clinical placements.
- 3 Pass the NCLEX-RN (the registered nurse exam) and work as an RN (registered nurse)** 2 or more years
Ontario's program requires the equivalent of 2 years of full-time nursing practice within the past 5 years, and successful applicants often have more.
- 4 Master's degree in the NP (nurse practitioner) stream** 2 to 4 years
About 2 years full time, or longer part time while you keep nursing. Includes hundreds of supervised clinical hours.
- 5 NP exam and registration** A few months
Since July 2026, every NP (nurse practitioner) applicant in Ontario writes one national exam, the CNPLE (Canadian Nurse Practitioner Licensure Exam), a 4-hour multiple-choice test. Then you register in the extended class with your provincial nursing college.

Pros and cons

- + Diagnose and prescribe, with far more autonomy than a staff nurse
- + Six figures plus a strong public pension
- + Huge demand: millions of Canadians have no family doctor
- 8 to 9 years and two degrees
- You must be a nurse first, and usually keep nursing while you study
- Heavy responsibility and heavy charting

Optional boosts

Primary health care (family, all ages). Adult or pediatric acute care. Remote and northern practice. Doctorate.

Good to know

Prescribing power

NPs (nurse practitioners) in every province can prescribe medications, and most provinces now let them prescribe controlled drugs such as opioids and stimulants. Ontario added that in 2017.

One of the fastest-growing health jobs

Canada had about 8,600 nurse practitioners in direct patient care in 2025, and the number grew 10% in a single year. Most provinces are funding hundreds more seats.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Nurse practitioners, wages (updated Nov 2025)
College of Nurses of Ontario: Nurse practitioner exams
College of Nurses of Ontario: Application and membership fees
Ontario Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner program (ONPEC)

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/nurse-practitioner>



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