

# The role of the registered nurse (rn) in maternity nursing

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



Role of RN in Maternity Nursing First Middle initial and of Prof. First and of lecturer March 13, 2012 Role of Registered Nurse in Maternity Nursing

Registered Nurses (RN) have a pivotal role in Maternity Nursing – a specialized field which focuses on providing care for women and their families during the antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum and neonatal stages of this normal and healthy life event. Their primary focus is to ensure emotional and physical well-being of the mother and child and encourage family support, participation and choice (Davis, n. d.). Unlike some of the other specialties in nursing which are moving out of the hospital into the community, maternity nursing is predominantly hospital based (Davis, n. d.). Maternity RNs typically care for women who are in labor, have complications of pregnancy or have recently delivered. Therefore, they must use professional judgment, critical thinking and have fast decision making skills (Davis, n. d.). As part of their role, they work closely with women, their families and other health care professionals and are on call 24 hrs a day for 7 days of the week. Some of the important responsibilities of the Maternity RNs include (Davis, n. d.):

1. Conduct assessment of each mother and baby and develop an individualized plan of care.
2. Collaborate with physicians and other healthcare providers to ensure that each patient gets an integrated care during their hospital stay.
3. Implement the plan of care by monitoring the mother and baby. Maternity RNs also evaluate the effectiveness of the plan of care and make modifications to meet the changing needs of the mother, newborn and the family.
4. Educate the patients about their care and address other topics that are related to women's health and newborn care.
5. Provide psychological and emotional support to patients and their

families. A Registered Nurse in maternity nursing is required to perform a variety of roles: Antepartum Nurse: As an antepartum nurse, the RN briefly interacts with patients having normal pregnancy at routine checkups. However their role becomes critical when patients have complications of pregnancy requiring bed rest and hospitalization. Their role typically includes comfort promotion which includes “ measures to relieve discomforts caused by physiological changes of pregnancy” (Simpson & Creehan, 2008, p. 113). They also counsel the family and encourage behaviors that enhance maternal and fetal well-being like quitting smoking and other harmful lifestyle practices. They are responsible to monitor and assess the patient on a regular basis and conduct non-stress tests as part of the prenatal screening (Elvish, 2008). Labor and Delivery Nurse: As a labor and delivery nurse, the RN is responsible to provide care to patients in labor who have uncomplicated or complicated deliveries. They prepare the expectant mother to meet the baby, insert any necessary IVs and monitor the progress of the mother and the baby (Gibbons, n. d.). They assist the woman in labor and help the attending doctor to deliver the baby. They also help the fathers to be a part of the big day and encourage him to bond with the baby (Gibbons, n. d.). The labor and delivery nurse also provides follow-up care and answers any questions that parents have about caring for their new born (Gibbons, n. d.). Circulating Nurse: As a circulating nurse, the RN is responsible for managing the nursing care of patients within the operating room. They are responsible to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for the patient and assess their condition before, during and after the operation (Heisler, 2009). They open sterile packs, operate machinery and keep accurate

records about the supplies and equipment used (Heisler, 2009). **Scrub Nurse:** As a scrub nurse, the RN works directly with the surgeon during a cesarean delivery by passing instruments, sponges and other items that are needed during the procedure (Carson, 2012). Before the surgery, scrub nurses need to ensure that the operating room is sterile. They are responsible for the sponge counts, the blades, needles and instruments check during the surgery. They are also responsible for monitoring the patient's vital signs and watch for signs of shock (Carson, 2012). Therefore they must be anticipating, have quick reactions and keen observation skills in addition to having the knowledge of anatomy of the operative procedures. **Postpartum Nurse:** As a postpartum nurse, the RN is responsible to provide care to patients who have recently delivered. This includes helping new mothers to become comfortable in handling their infants. They will help first time mothers by showing them how to wash and feed the baby (Weathersbe, n. d.). They will also show them how to change and dress the new born, organize their clothing and toys and wash and sterilize bottles. The postpartum nurse will also educate the new mothers about the strengths and weaknesses of baby care issues like using cloth diapers versus pampers and bottle feeding versus breast feeding (Weathersbe, n. d.). **Nursery Nurse:** As a nursery nurse, the RN is responsible to provide care to newborns. In conclusion, the RN is required to fulfill a variety of roles in maternity nursing. They should also have the right personality and temperament to adjust to the demands of maternal and child care. Hence, the role of a Registered Nurse is pivotal in providing the best possible standard of care to patients and their families during the antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum and

neonatal stages of this normal and healthy life event. Reference Carson, C. (2012). Roles of a scrub nurse. EHow. Retrieved from [http://www. ehow. com/ about\\_5149777\\_roles-scrub-nurse. html](http://www. ehow. com/ about_5149777_roles-scrub-nurse. html) Davis, M. (n. d.). Labor and delivery staff nurse. Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow. Retrieved from <http://www. nursesource. org/labor. html> Elvish. (2008). Long-term antepartum care in the hospital. Allnurses. com. Retrieved from <http://allnurses. com/nicu-nursing-neonatal/long-term-antepartum-358503. html> Gibbons, J. (n. d.). What are the duties of labor and delivery nurse? EHow. Retrieved from [http://www. ehow. com/facts\\_4830636\\_duties-labor-delivery-nurse. html](http://www. ehow. com/facts_4830636_duties-labor-delivery-nurse. html) Heisler, J. (2009). Circulating nurse definition. About. com. Retrieved from <http://surgery. about. com/od/glossaryofsurgicalterms/g/CirculatingNurse. htm> Simpson, K. R. & Creehan, P. A. (2008). AWHONN's Perinatal Nursing. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Weathersbe, K. (n. d.). Postpartum nurse job description. EHow. Retrieved from [http://www. ehow. com/about\\_6461570\\_postpartum-nurse-job-description. html](http://www. ehow. com/about_6461570_postpartum-nurse-job-description. html)