

Why Have Nursing Care Plans?

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Nursing care plans make up the whole of the nursing industry, especially in tense situations like the ER where making a mistake on a patient's record could be a life or death matter. Nursing care plans eliminate this risk by recording exactly what the patient has done for the day (in terms of food, medication, and possibly exercise), and informs the next nurse on-call what they should monitor or give to the patient during their shift. Without this vital information, the hospital system would be sorely amiss and patients would not be receiving the care they desperately need during their stays.

Picture a hospital without a nursing care plan: patients would either be neglected or too serviced. Patients would be overdosing on medication left and right, would be over-exerting their strength in rehabilitative work, and would be eating too little or too much food per day. Nursing care plans keep all of this in check without disrupting the hospital's schedule or patients' lives. Nurses are the vital life-blood of every hospital and clinic, a fact well recognized by most doctors, although not by the media. The media has portrayed doctors as the care-givers of patients, when in fact it is the nurse who knows their history, sits with the patient when they are scared, and delivers their medication on a daily basis. Nurses need to be kept up-to-date on any changes in the patient's condition, much more so than doctors, so that they can relay this information to the next nurse who comes on duty.

Doctors count on nurses for this type of information, and any nurse who is not updated on her patient will be met with dire consequences in the medical world. Nursing care plans have come a long way from the original charts that nurses used to deliver messages to new technological advances that allow them the flexibility to mark off a patient through computers or other devices. This has been an important part of updating the medical field – along with updating patient files so that they are now stored on computers rather than loose folders, nursing care plans are now typically stored in the same manner. It is much easier to lose a paper/folder than a computer file (although some would argue the opposite due to computer malfunctions). However, despite any technological set-backs, the nursing care plan continues to march forward and ensure that nurses are in charge of patient care and safety.