



When I grow up, I want to be...

A Nurse

Could you work on a ship with men holding machine guns just outside?

While at high school, Jenny Adamthwaite knew she wanted to go into the Medical/Health field. Originally wanting to study Physiotherapy, she is now really happy she studied nursing. Jenny worked in Horsham for two years, and is now a Clinical Nurse Specialist of Peri-operative Nursing at Swan Hill District Hospital. There are no typical days for Jenny as each day varies and can be very unpredictable. The nurses rotate between Accident and Emergency, Pre-Admission, the Sterilising Department, and working in theatre. At the moment her day includes scrubbing, assisting the surgeon, operating and organising the instruments.

Schedule

- 7:00am-start work
- 9:30am-10minute break
- 12:30pm-30minute lunch break
- 2:30pm-10minute break
- 3:30pm-finish work



Qualifications

Jenny studied English, C and A Extension (maths), Chemistry, Biology, and Human Development in year 12 which led to a Bachelor of Nursing at Deakin University in Geelong. The course was full time over three years and involved lectures and placements. She then completed a Graduate Nurse Program for one year. Jenny then went back to university, studying full time with part time work, to complete a Post Graduate Diploma of Peri-operative Nursing.

Uni life

"I enjoyed uni life; there were good and bad parts, though, which is like any course. There were a lot of placements, which was good. Each week during third year we had three days of placements, and two days theory, so it was hard to fit everything in."

Best parts

"Assisting in surgery is the most interesting part of my job, because you organise the instruments for the surgeons, and you have to know what they are going to do and how they are going to do it and when. Basically you have to read their minds. Most days, I really enjoy my job: working with patients is great, but sometimes it is hard to get on with some personalities."

Words of advice

"Nursing is hard work and you don't really get a lot of thanks for it, but you make some really good friends with the people you work with. It would be good to talk to someone who knows about the career you're interested in, so they can tell you what really happens in that occupation and you can get an idea about whether you would enjoy it or not. People find out very quickly whether or not they enjoy the job and people in theatre find out on the first day whether or not they can handle it. Also nurses in the country are expected to do more than nurses in the city."

Opportunities in Africa

"In March I volunteered in Liberia (Western Africa), where I worked on a hospital ship. Everyone on the ship was a volunteer and they all wanted to be there and all had the same goal. It was a fantastic experience and the most rewarding part of my career so far. The country was in a Civil War for fourteen years and it only finished three years ago. There were UN soldiers everywhere, there were tanks down the street, and men in camouflage gear with machine guns. The only medical care in the country was on the ship, and they were such strong people and so grateful. Hopefully I will go back on the ship one day."

Crazy time on the ship

A man fell out of a tree, and twelve months later he went to a dentist, thinking he had a tooth problem. The dentist referred him onto a surgeon on the ship. The surgeon operated and went up through the mouth and removed an eight-cm by three-cm stick from his nasal cavity, and then sutured the inside of his mouth, which avoided any scars. Another interesting day.

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