

A Day in the Life of One Medical-Surgical Nurse

When we asked Julie A. Green, RN, to describe a typical day in her life as a medical-surgical (med-surg) nurse, she couldn't help but laugh. Our interview with her **revealed** that each day for a med-surg nurse is anything but typical. Read on to get a **glimpse** into Green's experience in the fast-paced, team-based, **patient-oriented** world of med-surg nursing.



Green, who has been a **practicing** nurse for 23 years, is a med-surg nurse at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio. She was the 2014 recipient of the Clinical Practice Award from the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN).

7:00 a.m.: Shift Begins

For the past 13 years, Green has worked on the surgical short-stay floor (短时手术及观察区) at the Cleveland Clinic, where most of her patients are able to be **discharged** after 23 hours. Her floor has a single hall with 14 beds that are almost always occupied by patients – sometimes she may have up to 10 patients in one shift. The goal, Green explains, is to provide her patients with what they need to get discharged and home safely. There is a quick patient **turnover** on her floor, and her duties include acting as a charge nurse, managing patient flow, working with **technicians** and educating patients.

“We do whatever our patients need. There’s no job we won’t do,” said Green.

8:00 a.m.: Provide Patient Care

Not only does Green need to know how to treat patients recovering from the full spectrum of operations (各种手术), she also needs to learn how to appropriately treat patients who come to her floor from all around the world. The Cleveland Clinic serves a diverse range of patients from across the globe, so Green **notes** that cultural competency is very important in her practice.

9:00 a.m.: Meet New Crop of Student Nurses in Rotations

Certain days, Green appreciates having the opportunity to work with new nurses. Of her three children, two are currently in nursing school, and she takes the **mentor** role very seriously. Although she's been a practicing nurse for 23 years, she remembers her first year of nursing very well.

“It was so **intense**,” Green explained. “It's **terrifying** to make the **transition** from student to **full-fledged** RN. It takes a year to become confident on your own.”

10:00 a.m.: At the Bedside

Green knew she wanted to be a nurse ever since she was in elementary school, later volunteering as a candy striper starting in 7th grade.

“I can't imagine a more **rewarding** career,” said Green. “And it's different every day. Nursing can be very difficult, but when you get a hug from a patient or interact with the ones who want to hold your hand – that's what makes your job worth all the hard work.”

As described by the AMSN when Green won the 2014 Clinical Practice Award, it is evident that she is committed to her patients. In the description, AMSN notes how Green has been part of a unit initiative that offers patients **earplugs** and **headphones**

to assist them with a quiet night. Additionally, AMSN notes that Green is always going the extra mile to help patients, including **walking** lost families around the enormous Cleveland Clinic to make sure they find their destination.

11:00 a.m.: Join the Team

Green believes that med-surg nursing is a very team-oriented **specialty**, noting that it's an atmosphere of collaboration and **synergy**, where the staff works together and helps out if there's something to be done. She **credits** her team's management for the positive team atmosphere.

“I met my best friend at work,” said Green. “We've actually worked here together for nearly 21 years.”

12:00 p.m.: Brief Lunch

“Our team nurse manager is extremely supportive,” said Green. “The team manager and assistant nurse manager take over around lunch time so that each of the nurses can take breaks to eat and use the **restroom**. It's all hands on deck since we're so busy and such a small **staff!**”

1:00 p.m.: Show Some HEART

Green is a HEART (Hear the story, **Empathize**, Apologize, Respond to the Problem, Thank the person) coach at the Cleveland Clinic. The HEART method is a way of interacting with patients and their families and properly managing their complaints.

“It's not just for patients,” said Green. “It works with **co-workers** and at home too!”

2:00 p.m.: Share Nursing Perspective

Once a month, Green meets with an interdisciplinary team to help develop projects that focus on implementing best practices in the discharge domain.

“Our patients want to get home,” said Green. “But we want to make sure they are equipped to go home so they will have **optimal** outcomes.”

Green is currently a **principal** investigator on a research project about patient education titled “Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Pre-Discharge Multi-method VTE Prevention (出院前静脉血栓栓塞多重预防) Patient Education Plan for Knowledge **Retention**.” Green also promotes interdisciplinary collaboration as the **co-chair** of the Shared **Governance** Committee at the Cleveland Clinic.

“I encourage everyone to get involved,” said Green. “We can learn so much from each other!”

3:00 p.m.: End of Shift

Green typically works three eight hour shifts and one 12-hour shift per week. Many med-surg nurses work only 12-hour shifts, but Green has been able to **adapt** her nursing schedule to suit different stages of her life. She is grateful for the **flexibility** that her nursing career has afforded her. At the end of her shift, she’s ready to get home, get some rest and spend time with her family.

“Then I’m ready to start all over again!” she said.

New Words

1. reveal *vt.* 显示
2. glimpse *n.* 一瞥, 大概了解
3. patient-oriented *adj.* 以病人为中心的
4. practicing *adj.* 执业的, 从业的
5. discharge *vt.* 安排出院; *n.* 出院
6. turnover *n.* 周转, 流动
7. technician *n.* 技术员, 从事专门技术的人士
8. note *vt.* 指出
9. mentor *n.* 导师, 老师
10. intense *adj.* 紧张的, 强度大的
11. terrifying *adj.* 令人恐惧的
12. transition *n.* 过渡, 转变
13. full-fledged *n.* 羽翼丰满的, 成熟的, 有充分资格的
14. rewarding *n.* 值得的, 有益的, 有回报的
15. earplug *n.* 防噪音耳塞
16. headphone *n.* 头戴式耳机
17. walk *vt.* 陪...走
18. specialty *n.* 专业
19. synergy *n.* 协同
20. credit *vt.* 信任, 赞同
21. restroom *n.* 洗手间, 休息室
22. staff *n.* 职员, 员工
23. empathize *vt.* 情感移入, 心领神会, 具有同感
24. co-worker *n.* 同事
25. optimal *adj.* 最佳的, 最理想的
26. principal *adj.* 主要的
27. retention *n.* 保留, 记忆力
28. co-chair *n.* 共同(联合)主席

- 29. governance *n.* 管理
- 30. adapt *vt.* 修改, 改变 (以适应新的状况)
- 31. flexibility *n.* 灵活性

Phrases & Expressions

- 1. can't help but 禁不住, 不得不
- 2. be anything but 一点也不, 根本不
- 3. up to (数量) 多达 (*c.f.* be up to, 取决于)
- 4. patient flow 患者的流动情况, 病人流向
- 5. cultural competency 文化能力, 文化胜任力
- 6. candy striper 在医院协助护士工作志愿者
- 7. interact with 互动, 交往
- 8. be committed to 全身心地投入, 致力于
- 9. go the extra mile 加倍努力, 更加努力
- 10. take over 接管
- 11. be grateful for 因...而心存感激