

Introduction to Critical Care Nursing

Critical Care Nursing

- Specialty area of nursing that involve caring for patients and families who are undergoing a life-threatening illness or injury
- Critical care environment needs nurse with high level of special skills such as critical thinking, decision making, competent nursing skills

Critical care is classified using four levels of patient acuity, level-3 patients should have a minimum registered nurse–patient ratio of 1:1

Table 1. **Levels of care**

Level	Description
0	Patients whose needs can be met through normal ward care in an acute hospital
1	Patients at risk of deteriorating, or those recently relocated from higher levels of care, whose needs can be met on an acute ward, with support from the critical care team
2	Patients needing more detailed observation or intervention, including support for a single failing organ system or post-operative care, or those 'stepping down' from level-3 care
3	Patients needing advanced respiratory support alone, or basic respiratory support and support for at least two organ systems. This includes all complex patients requiring support for multi-organ failure

Source: Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (2019)

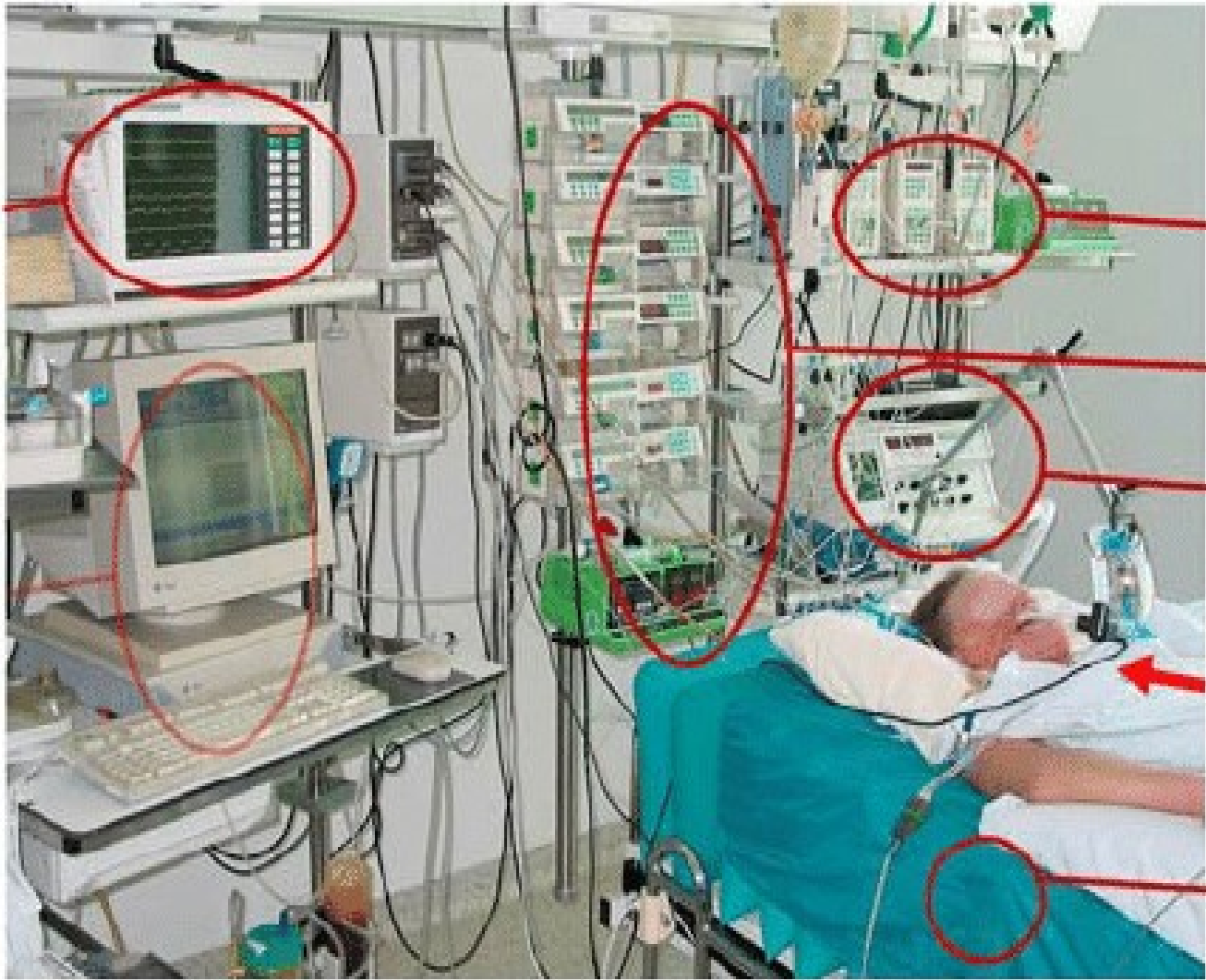
Critical care nursing is defined as

- Caring for the high-acuity patient requiring intensive monitoring and organ support therapies. The nurse will be able to apply knowledge, skills, and critical thinking in the holistic approach to caring for these acutely unwell patients and their family.

- Critical care also is called intensive care.
- ICU Nurse
- In the ICU, patients get round-the-clock care by a specially trained team.

ICU team

- Specially trained nurses (critical care nurse)
- Physicians
- Respiratory therapists
- Care managers
- Physical and occupational therapists
- Other providers



Bedside-Monitor

PDMS-Workstation

Infusion pumps

Syringe pumps

Ventilator

Patient

Alternating pressure mattrress

Clinical factors recorded by bedside monitor



- Heart rhythm

- Heart rate

- Oxygen saturation

- Respiratory rate

- Temperature

- Arterial blood pressure

- Exhaled carbon dioxide concentration/partial pressure

- Central venous pressure

- Non-invasive blood pressure

A critical care nurse

- is ‘a registered nurse who has the right knowledge, skills, and competencies to meet the needs of a critically ill patient without direct supervision.

Special Skill of Critical Care Nurse

1. Critical thinking skills: Using nursing process as guide for problem solving.
2. Collaborative skills
3. Delegation skills
4. Computer skills

Conditions Related to Critical Care

- Heart problems.
- Lung problems.
- Organ failure.
- Brain trauma.
- Blood infections (sepsis)
- Drug-resistant infections.
- Serious injury (car crash, burns)

- A critical care nurse.

Often called ICU nurses because of the unit they commonly work in, critical care nurses are highly trained to understand and provide care for people of all ages who are recovering from life-threatening illnesses or injuries.

What Does A Critical Care Nurse Do

- Critical care nursing involves working with doctors and specialists to assess, treat, and monitor critically ill patients while also providing their basic care.

What Does A Critical Care Nurse Do

- A typical shift as an ICU nurse can include things like assessing a patient's condition and starting treatment, taking vital signs, communicating with patients and their families, setting up IVs, and administering medication.

What Does A Critical Care Nurse Do

Many times, patients in the ICU are ventilated or have multiple IV drips.

For this reason, registered nurses in critical care units (also known as intensive care units or ICUs) need more knowledge of equipment and charting than other registered nurses.

1. Assessing and treating patients. It's fairly common that a patient sees a nurse in the ICU before a doctor, so ICU nurses will be expected to assess a patient's condition and start treatment.

2. This could include everything from taking vital signs to dressing wounds. They'll also be in charge of monitoring a patient's progress and reporting back to the physician

What Does A Critical Care Nurse Do

3. Ordering diagnostic tests.

- Many of the critical care patients you will see on a day-to-day basis will be suffering from some kind of injury or illness, which means they'll need diagnostic testing. It's often up to the critical care nurse to send orders for x-rays, ECGs, or CT scans and then go over those results with the doctor to decide on a treatment plan.

4. Acting as a patient advocate.

When critical care patients are physically at their worst, the nurse's role is to be there to provide support, education, and empathy.

This is done in several different ways—from helping patients make informed decisions about their health, to translating complex medical terms, to acting as a liaison between patients and their doctor.

5. Monitoring medical equipment.

Many critical care patients will be set up on cardiac monitors or ventilators, so their nurse will be the one in charge of setting up those machines and regularly monitoring and tracking a patient's progress.

What are
the 7 C's
of critical
care?

1

Carefulness

2

Consistency

3

Closure

4

Compassion

5

Communication

6

Consideration

7

Comfort