

# Real-life story - Jenny Abraham

Jenny wanted to be a nurse from an early age as all the women in her family are nurses and she knew what it was like first hand.

## Jenny Abraham

### Perioperative specialist laparoscopic nurse practitioner

#### Employer or university

University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Working in theatre, you're right at the heart of patient care and get to work as part of a team with experienced surgeons

- **How I got into the role**

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I was brought up on a farm and I'm sure that looking after animals lends itself to working in a caring profession.

I started my nursing career immediately after A levels. Once I completed my general nurse training, I secured my first job as an orthopaedic theatre nurse. I have enjoyed a varied career in the theatre environment and have given lectures at the local university alongside my day job. My training at Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, was a great foundation for my career.

I have worked in the theatre environment for most of my nursing career, which now stretches to over 25 years. I enjoyed surgical nursing throughout my training but never really thought of theatres because no newly qualified nurse went back to theatre. Rotating between medicine and surgery after qualifying was routine back in the day, but

eventually I jumped at the chance to work in theatres where every three months I worked in a range of different specialities, as well as in anaesthetics, and recovery.

The NHS has been a great employer and has allowed me to move sideways and up the career ladder in a range of nursing roles. Working in day surgery between 1991 and 2008 really moved my career forward because I was involved in new developments, such as pre-operative assessment and developing services for children.

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### **What I do**

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I currently work within laparoscopic cholecystectomy, which involves caring for patients who undergo keyhole surgery to remove their gallbladder. I am also increasingly involved in other areas of keyhole surgery such as laparoscopic fundoplication, a procedure to help prevent acid travelling the wrong way into the oesophagus, and bariatric (or weight loss) operations.

I care for patients at all stages of their hospital stay, from when they are first admitted and during the operation, to when they have made a successful recovery and are well enough to go home.

This involves talking patients through what will happen during surgery, and answering any questions or concerns they may have. During surgery, I assist the surgeon and the rest of the team and carry out tasks such as suturing.

Keyhole surgery means that patients have a much faster recovery time and are in less pain after the operation, but one of my responsibilities is to monitor the patient's health and check whether they are at risk of developing blood clots or other infections and prescribe medication where appropriate.

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### **The best bits and challenges**

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Working in theatre, you're right at the heart of patient care and get to work as part of a team with experienced surgeons as well as range of other healthcare staff. The job can be demanding with long hours, but the variety of the role and seeing patients recover to full health certainly makes it all worthwhile.

A laparoscopic nurse role gives me everything I want: patient contact from beginning to end, working in surgery which I love, and some teaching. It has enabled me to develop a different set of skills and knowledge that I wouldn't have got in other areas of nursing.

You definitely need the general nursing skills, such as being a good communicator and being people-focused, but you also need the technical expertise to carry out the job effectively.

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