

# Er Nurse Cheat Sheet

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## CHEAT SHEET FOR ER NURSES

### ER CHEAT SHEET

**Normal Adult Vital Signs**

BP: ~120/80 mmHg Systolic  
~80 mmHg Diastolic

HR: 60-100

RR: 12-20

O2: 92%-100%

Temp: 97.8°-100.5°

**Basic Metabolic Panel (BMP)**

**Common Splints**

**Parkland Formula**

**Suspected Stroke**

**Suspected ACS**

**Severe Sepsis**

**Special Notes**

Rhythm	Characteristics	Treatment	Notes
Supraventricular Tachycardia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rate &gt;100 bpm</li><li>Regular initial and ventricular rhythm</li><li>P waves absent in preceding T wave</li><li>Unchanging rate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Vagal maneuvers</li><li>Adenosine</li><li>CCB, BB, amio</li><li>Cardioversion</li><li>Cardiac catheterization</li></ul>	Caused by physical exertion, stress, anxiety, medication abnormalities, hyperthyroidism, stimulation
Atrial Fibrillation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Atrial and ventricular rates irregular</li><li>No P waves</li><li>Can be rapid with onset</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CCB, BB, amio</li><li>Anticoagulation</li><li>Cardioversion</li><li>Thrombolysis</li></ul>	Caused by heart failure, heart disease, stress, inflammation, hyperthyroidism, rapid onset
Atrial Flutter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Atrial rhythm regular but rapid</li><li>QRS complex irregular</li><li>Sawtooth P waves</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CCB, BB, amio</li><li>Anticoagulation</li><li>Cardioversion</li></ul>	Caused by heart failure, PVD, MI, hyperthyroidism, stress
Ventricular Tachycardia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Normal rate 140-200</li><li>QRS complex wide</li><li>P waves not discernible</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>IV potassium (PRP and stabilization)</li><li>IVF a 100% cardioversion</li></ul>	Caused by MI, CVD, valve disease, heart failure, hyperthyroidism, hyperkalemia, PVD
Ventricular Fibrillation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ventricular rate irregular and rapid</li><li>QRS complex wide, irregular</li><li>P waves not discernible</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>IVF CPR and follow ACLS protocol</li></ul>	Caused by MI, untreated hypoxia, hyperkalemia, hypermagnesemia, hypothermia, drug toxicity

**Proximal Long Arm**  
Dislocate humerus, fracture of humerus, radial head and neck fracture

**Distal Long Arm**  
Fracture of radius and ulna, radial head and neck fracture, distal humerus fracture

**Scapula/Yang Spine**  
Fracture of scapula and spine

**Thumb Spine**  
Fracture of thumb, base of thumb, fracture of thumb and wrist

**Proximal Lower Leg Fracture**  
Fracture of tibia and fibula, fracture of tibia and fibula, fracture of tibia and fibula

**Distal Lower Leg Fracture**  
Fracture of tibia and fibula, fracture of tibia and fibula, fracture of tibia and fibula

**Special Notes**

- Times are from arrival to Emergency Department
- Every hospital protocol will vary but will be similar to these conditions
- Times vary for hospitals without a cath lab that will require transfer

ER nurse cheat sheet is an essential tool for emergency room nurses, providing quick access to critical information that can aid in fast-paced and high-stress situations. In the emergency department, nurses are often the first to assess and treat patients, making it vital to have a reliable reference guide. This article will delve into the components of an ER nurse cheat sheet, covering essential skills, common procedures, medication guidelines, and vital signs interpretation, among other crucial aspects.

# Essential Skills for ER Nurses

Emergency room nurses require a unique set of skills to effectively manage the diverse challenges they face. Here are some of the essential skills every ER nurse should master:

- **Assessment Skills:** Quickly and accurately assessing a patient's condition is crucial. ER nurses must be proficient in performing primary and secondary assessments.
- **Critical Thinking:** Nurses must analyze information rapidly and make decisions regarding patient care in dynamic environments.
- **Communication:** Effective communication with team members, patients, and families is vital for delivering coordinated care.
- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in various procedures, such as IV insertion, intubation, and wound care, is essential.
- **Crisis Management:** Being able to remain calm and composed during emergencies is a significant asset.

## Common Procedures in the Emergency Room

ER nurses frequently perform a range of medical procedures. Having a cheat sheet that outlines these procedures can save time and ensure accuracy. Here's a list of common procedures ER nurses should be familiar with:

1. **IV Line Insertion:** Techniques for peripheral and central line insertion, including site selection and catheter care.
2. **Wound Care:** Steps for cleaning, dressing, and monitoring wounds.
3. **Administering Medications:** Guidelines for medication administration, including routes, dosages, and side effects.
4. **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR):** Steps for performing CPR and using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).
5. **Intubation:** Indications, equipment, and steps for successful intubation.

## Wound Care Techniques

Wound care is a critical skill for ER nurses. Here are the standard steps to follow:

1. Assess the wound for size, depth, and signs of infection.
2. Clean the wound using saline or an antiseptic solution.
3. Apply a dressing appropriate for the type and severity of the wound.
4. Document the assessment and treatment provided.

## Medication Guidelines

Understanding medication administration is crucial for ER nurses. The following guidelines can be included in an ER nurse cheat sheet:

### Common Emergency Medications

- Aspirin: Used for chest pain, suspected myocardial infarction.
- Nitroglycerin: Administered for angina and acute heart failure.
- Epinephrine: Used in anaphylaxis and cardiac arrest.
- Atropine: Administered for bradycardia.
- Amiodarone: Used for ventricular tachycardia and fibrillation.

### Medication Administration Routes

- Oral: For stable patients who can swallow.
- Intravenous (IV): For immediate effect; used in emergencies.
- Intramuscular (IM): For slow absorption; often used for vaccines or certain medications.
- Subcutaneous (SC): For insulin or other slow-release medications.

## Dosage Calculations

Proper dosage calculation is vital. Here's a basic formula:

- $\text{Dosage} = (\text{Desired Dose} \div \text{Available Dose}) \times \text{Quantity}$

For example, if a physician orders 10 mg of a medication that is available in 20 mg/mL, the calculation would be:

- $\text{Dosage} = (10 \text{ mg} \div 20 \text{ mg/mL}) \times 1 \text{ mL} = 0.5 \text{ mL}$

# Vital Signs Interpretation

Monitoring and interpreting vital signs is a cornerstone of patient assessment in the emergency room. An ER nurse cheat sheet should include normal ranges and critical values for vital signs:

## Normal Vital Signs Ranges

- Heart Rate: 60-100 beats per minute
- Blood Pressure: 90/60 mmHg to 120/80 mmHg
- Respiratory Rate: 12-20 breaths per minute
- Temperature: 97°F to 100.4°F (36.1°C to 38°C)

## Critical Values to Watch For

- Heart Rate: < 60 or > 120 beats per minute
- Blood Pressure: < 90/60 or > 180/120 mmHg
- Respiratory Rate: < 10 or > 30 breaths per minute
- Temperature: < 95°F (35°C) or > 104°F (40°C)

## Emergency Protocols and Guidelines

Each emergency department has specific protocols that nurses must adhere to. An ER nurse cheat sheet should include important protocols for common conditions:

### Cardiac Arrest Protocol

1. Call for help and activate the emergency response team.
2. Start CPR immediately.
3. Use the AED as soon as it is available.
4. Administer medications as per the advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) guidelines.

### Stroke Protocol

1. Assess the patient using the FAST method (Face, Arms, Speech, Time).
2. Notify the stroke team if stroke is suspected.
3. Obtain a CT scan to rule out hemorrhage.
4. Administer thrombolytics if within the appropriate time window.

# Documentation and Charting

Accurate documentation is critical in the emergency room. An ER nurse cheat sheet should remind nurses of the key elements to include in charting:

- Patient's chief complaint
- Vital signs upon arrival
- Assessment findings
- Interventions performed
- Medications administered
- Patient's response to treatment

## Conclusion

An **ER nurse cheat sheet** is an invaluable resource for nurses working in the emergency department. By having quick access to essential skills, medication guidelines, procedures, and protocols, nurses can provide high-quality care to patients in critical situations. Regularly updating and personalizing this cheat sheet can enhance its effectiveness and ensure that it meets the specific needs of the healthcare team. As the landscape of emergency care continues to evolve, staying informed and prepared is key to achieving positive patient outcomes.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is an ER nurse cheat sheet?

An ER nurse cheat sheet is a quick reference guide that contains essential information, protocols, and guidelines for emergency nursing practices, helping nurses make rapid decisions in high-pressure situations.

### What are some common contents found in an ER nurse cheat sheet?

Common contents include vital sign ranges, medication dosages, emergency procedures, assessment checklists, and algorithms for managing critical conditions such as cardiac arrest or stroke.

## **How can an ER nurse cheat sheet improve patient care?**

It improves patient care by providing nurses with quick access to critical information, enabling faster and more accurate responses to emergencies, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes.

## **Are there digital versions of ER nurse cheat sheets available?**

Yes, many digital versions are available as mobile apps or downloadable PDFs, allowing ER nurses to access cheat sheets on their smartphones or tablets for convenience.

## **Can I create my own ER nurse cheat sheet?**

Absolutely! You can tailor your own cheat sheet to include specific protocols, medications, and procedures that are most relevant to your work environment and patient population.

## **What is the importance of keeping an ER nurse cheat sheet updated?**

It is crucial to keep the cheat sheet updated to reflect the latest guidelines, medications, and best practices, ensuring that nurses provide the most current and effective care.

## **Are there specific guidelines for using an ER nurse cheat sheet?**

Yes, guidelines include using it as a supplementary tool rather than a replacement for critical thinking, ensuring accuracy in high-stress situations, and regularly reviewing the content for relevance.

## **What role does an ER nurse cheat sheet play in training new nurses?**

It serves as an educational tool for new nurses, helping them familiarize themselves with essential information and protocols, thus speeding up their learning curve and enhancing their confidence in the ER.

## **Where can I find reputable ER nurse cheat sheets online?**

Reputable sources include nursing organization websites, educational institutions, and healthcare forums, where experienced nurses share their resources and advice on effective cheat sheets.

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