

Working in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU) for the past five shifts has been an incredible experience that has both challenged and inspired me. Having the opportunity to work on the very unit where I will be employed after graduating from nursing school has been especially meaningful. It has provided me with a deeper understanding of the type of critically ill patients I will be caring for, while also offering invaluable hands-on exposure to the advanced technology and equipment commonly used in this environment.

One of the most eye-opening aspects of my experience has been learning how to care for patients with complex and life-threatening conditions. The patients in the SICU often require intensive monitoring and sophisticated interventions, and I've had the chance to observe and contribute to their care in a meaningful way. I've become more proficient in charting and documenting the clinical status of critically ill patients, an essential skill that I know will serve me well throughout my career.

In particular, I've had the opportunity to work with advanced equipment, such as the Impella heart pump and ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation). These devices are used for patients with severe cardiac or respiratory failure, and being involved in their management has expanded my understanding of how these interventions provide life-saving support while also presenting unique challenges. I have learned not only how to monitor the impella monitor and using PA lines to obtain data hourly to see if the impella interventions have been working properly.

My preceptor has been a huge asset in guiding me through this learning process. They have been patient and supportive, pushing me to improve both my technical skills and my clinical knowledge. One of the key areas where I have grown is in my understanding of medications used in critical care. I've learned to identify and memorize various medications, including pressors and sedatives, and understand their role in stabilizing critically ill patients. This has included learning how to titrate these medications according to patient needs, adjusting dosages based on vital signs and lab values, and understanding the maximum doses that can be safely administered.

In addition, my preceptor has emphasized the importance of memorizing lab values and what they represent, which has been crucial in helping me interpret patients' conditions more effectively. This has strengthened my ability to make informed decisions about care, anticipate potential complications, and collaborate with the multidisciplinary team.