Metamorphosis of the Student Nurse Uniform

• Nurses uniforms have experienced dramatic alterations since their widespread emergence in the 19th century. From starched dresses to comfortable unisex scrubs, the design of nurses uniforms changed based on time period and functionality,

• Prior to the 1800s, nursing was a casual profession left to the monks, nuns, and women with low morals who set up make-shift hospitals, usually in churches. Nursing did not become a respected profession until the emergence of Military Nursing during the Crimean War.

• Florence Nightingale's historical contributions to the field of nursing eventually led to the creation of the Nightingale Training School for Nurses, which opened in 1860 in St. Thomas hospital in London. One of Nightingale's students designed the uniform, and its style changed very little up until the 1940s. From the late 19th century onwards, nursing became a respected profession.
Beginning in the 1890s, nurses donned uniforms that were considered to be "state of the art" protection against illness, but were also functional expressions of feminine virtue. The uniform allowed for nurses to effectively treat patients, while also maintaining a respectable appearance. The original nurses uniform was known as the "fever proof" uniform, and covered the entire body, although it left the face and the hands uncovered.

The uniform was used not only for hygienic reasons, but also for identification purposes. Nurses needed to be easily recognized in a hospital setting. The traditional dress included a long sleeved dress with a starched collar, sometimes including a bowtie, a starched apron with shoulder straps, and a frilly cap that was kept in place with ties under the chin.

### 1892-1895

- 2 piece chambray uniform had a gathered skirt, leg of mutton sleeves which puffed from the shoulder to the elbow and was tight from the elbow to the wrist.
- A white detachable bertha which fitted snugly around the neck extended over the bertha, which opened in front, was pinned at the top with a large decorative pin or with a watch and chain.
- A white gathered apron covered the dress skirt.
1895

• The leg of mutton sleeves was changed to a smaller puffed sleeve with a 2 ½ in cuff at the wrist.
• The cap was changed radically.
• The rest of uniform remained the same

1905

• Smaller, straight long sleeve with a 3 inch detachable white cuff at the wrist
• An arm band was added- a white 3 inch band with a red strip ½ inch for the bottom edge and a red Maltese cross in the center of the cuff. JSH was embroidered in white in the center of the cross. The band was worn above the elbow on the left arm.
• A small 1 ½ inch collar replaced the bertha and fastened to the neck of the dress in front and back invisible with a collar button. A decorative pin could be used to fasten it in front.
• A bib was added to the apron attached midfront with two straps extending form the belt to the tip of the shoulders, crossing in the back and tucked under and pinned to the belt at side of center back.
1913

- Collar becomes a “tie”
- Cap remains the same
- Sleeves are shortened to above the elbow and retained the 3 inch detachable cuff and the arm band omitted

This uniform survived a period of 22 years the only change was the hemline

1936

- A small attached collar replaced the tie
- The dress became a shirt waist with sewn in belt
- Sleeves remained the same as did the cap and apron with gathered skirt
1946

- Apron skirt was changed to a 7 gore skirt opening down midback
- Students were allowed to marry at this time and this resulted in a maternity uniform - a white smock which comes mid thigh
- 1946 At the end of Probation period 6 months the bib was given to the student to add to the uniform.

- In the 1950s hats as ranking identifiers began to be de-emphasized, as it was believed the system led to low morale among trainees. The hat was also considered feminine, and by no longer requiring it the school hope to attract more male students+. Uniforms became less starched and even less complex – bigger hospitals meant more patients and faster paces and the laundry couldn’t keep up. Simple folded hats and paper hats replaced the crown-like caps, and more comfortable, less form fitting designs appeared for the dresses. Everything had to be wash-and-wear.

- In the 1950s nurses uniforms continued a rapid evolution in style. Becoming evermore functional, the uniform was short sleeved with a bibbed-front instead of the traditional apron. The caps saw a change into the "pill box" style. Due to high volume in hospitals, uniforms were designed to be simple in style and cleaning, and the starching of the garments was avoided to speed up laundry services in the hospitals. It was during the 1950s that the use of disposable paper caps became popular.

1955

- Uniform had a 6 gore skirt opening at side of midfront gore --buttoning 6-10 inches down from the waist.
• 1960 - Blue with a white pin feather striped dress with detachable apron worn only in clinical settings. This is the first uniform to be wash and wear fabric and had a much softer looking appearance.

• 1968 - changes were a detachable belt instead of a insert belt, also the pinafore apron was no longer worn in the clinical setting

• 1969 fabric changed to a self care washable fabric- elimination of the apron and making street shoe optional and new washable cap was introduced made from perma starch.
1970-80

- The surge of cultural change in the 1960s resulted in open collared uniforms, moving away from the image of purity portrayed by the traditional nurse attire. It was the beginning of the end for traditional nurse attire. Men began to steadily enter the profession during this period.

- Caps continued to change in the 1970s, and disposable paper caps became increasingly popular.

- By the late 1970s the hat had disappeared almost completely in the U.S. The new trend in nursing fashion, scrubs appear on the scene (for men anyway). Uniforms began to look more like regular clothing or in some cases like doctor’s coats.

- In the 1980s, disposable aprons become widely used.

- As male nurses became more prominent in the 1980s, a simple white tunic decorated with epaulettes distinguished them as nurses.
1990 - 2010

- Technology has also improved in the area of textiles. This has turned the perception of protection into a reality as certain garments become more stain resistant. In the hospital, and starched white garments were pushed aside in favor of comfortable and functional scrubs.

- Today, scrubs are the uniform of choice. There are a number of scrub that offer protection from microbial contamination with microbiostatic barriers.
- Scrubs allow nurses to effectively and comfortably treat patients, and due to its unisex design, there is no longer a clear distinction between the male and female nurses in hospitals.

- Today the differentiation between nurses, doctors, staff, etc. is only denoted by accessories and nametags. At most UTMB, everyone wears scrubs at all times to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Scrubs continue to be an identifier of health care professionals, allowing nurses to be both fashionable and fun in a variety of styles.

- 2010 Orange scrubs