

"I'm New to Emergency Nursing: How Do I Eat the Elephant?"

Q: "How do you eat an elephant?" A: One bite at a time!



That saying has never felt more accurate than when you're standing in the middle of a busy Emergency Department (ED) on your first shift. Alarms going off, unfamiliar faces everywhere, a dozen patients in your zone—and a thousand expectations swirling in your head. It's exhilarating... and terrifying.

Emergency nursing is vast, messy, and fast-paced. It's often described as the "swampy lowlands" of healthcare—where no two days are the same, and no single approach fits all. There's no neat, linear way to learn it. That's the elephant. And if you're new to the ED, you're probably wondering: *Where on earth do I even begin?*

Let's break it down.

Bite 1: Build Strong Foundations

Start with **core concepts**: ABCDE assessments, pain scoring, wound care, observations. These are the building blocks. You'll see them used daily, across every patient group. Mastering these early gives you confidence and helps you "speak the language" of the ED team.

Bite 2: Understand the System

Emergency care isn't just clinical—it's logistical. You need to understand patient flow, triage principles, documentation, prioritisation, and when to escalate. You don't need to know it all now—but becoming aware of how the department functions is a powerful step forward.

Bite 3: Get Comfortable with Uncertainty

Unlike other areas of nursing, emergency care rarely gives you time to plan. You'll need to think on your feet, act quickly with limited information, and tolerate the unknown. This takes time—and that's okay. Nobody walks into the ED knowing it all.

Bite 4: Learn in Layers

That's where the **Faculty of Emergency Nursing (FEN)** comes in. FEN's clinical programme was designed for emergency nurses, *by* emergency nurses. You don't have to absorb everything in one go. You can work through the programme at your pace—session by session, bite by bite.

Want to understand sepsis? There's a webinar for that.

Need to refresh ECG interpretation? We've got you covered.

Curious about frailty, safeguarding, or burns management? It's all there.

The webinars integrate anatomy, pathophysiology, and clinical judgement—without overwhelming you with university-style theory. It's practical. It's relevant. It's made for you.

One Step at a Time

Here's the secret: even senior ED nurses still take it one bite at a time. The learning never stops. But with a structured, supportive resource like FEN by your side, you don't have to chew it all alone.

You've got this. Let's eat that elephant.