

**Mental Health Nursing
Class Preparation
Antidepressant Therapy**

Directions: Please fill in the blanks and answer the questions in the spaces provided.

1. What is the mechanism by which antidepressant medications achieve their desired effect (regardless of the different physiological processes by which this action is accomplished)?

_The mechanism by which antidepressant medications achieve their desired effect is by inhibition of norepinephrine reuptake, as well as dopamine and/or serotonin. _____

2. For what must a nurse be on the alert with a client who is receiving antidepressant medication?

_A nurse must be on the alert for worsening depression or suicidal thoughts/behavior with a client who is receiving antidepressant medication. Nurses should also be on alert for seizures. _____

3. When should a nurse expect a client to begin showing signs of symptomatic relief after the initiation of antidepressant therapy?

_Initial improvement: 10-14 days; full effect: 4-8 weeks _____

4. Give an example of a tricyclic antidepressant: **_Desipramine _____**

Give an example of an MAOI: **_Isocarboxazid _____**

Give an example of an SSRI: **_Citalopram _____**

5. Describe some common side effects and nursing implications for tricyclic antidepressants.

_Side effects: anticholinergic effects (i.e., dry mouth, tachycardia, constipation, urinary retention, blurred vision, dizziness), orthostatic hypotension, sedation, weight gain; nursing implications: teach that initial improvement will take place in 10-14 days but full effects may take 4-8 weeks, note that dosage is always low initially and increased gradually, monitor for signs of abrupt withdrawal (i.e., nausea, dysrhythmias, nightmares, cold sweats), monitor for toxic effects (cardiovascular - i.e., dysrhythmias, tachycardia, MI) _____

6. **_____ Hypertensive Crisis _____** is the most potentially life-threatening adverse effect of MAOIs. Symptoms for which the nurse must be on the alert include:

_Initially: irritability, anxiety, flushing, sweating, fever; followed by: high fever, seizures, coma, death _____

7. What must be done to prevent these symptoms from occurring?

_People taking MAOIs must restrict their intake of tyramine (beer, wine, aged cheese, avocados) to prevent severe hypertension. _____