

**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)?

Antidepressant medications work by preventing serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake within the presynaptic terminals.

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

A nurse needs to be on alert for suicidal behavior or worsening depression.

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

Initial improvement occurs in 10-14 days and full effect takes place around 4-8 weeks.

4. Give an example of a tricyclic antidepressant: Amitriptyline

Give an example of an MAOI: Phenelzine

Give an example of an SSRI: Fluoxetine

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

Some common side effects of tricyclic antidepressants are dry mouth, urinary retention, and tachycardia. Some nursing implications are to monitor the patient's mood because tricyclic antidepressants can be fatal in an overdose.

6. Hypertension Crisis is the most potentially life-threatening adverse effect of MAOIs. Symptoms for which the nurse must be on the alert include initially monitoring irritability, anxiety, flushing, sweating, fever followed by high fever, seizures, coma, and death. Foods containing tyramine should be avoided.

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

Avoid foods that contain tyramine like beer, aged cheeses, and cured meats. Pseudoephedrine should also be avoided because it can lead to a hypertension crisis.