

**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)?

**They inhibit neurotransmitter reuptake, thereby increasing the neurotransmitter's availability in the synaptic gap. This, in turn, results in an improved mood.**

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

**Suicidal ideation and thoughts in the initial period of beginning antidepressant medication therapy.**

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

**2-4 weeks after beginning antidepressant therapy.**

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.

**Anticholinergic effects (dry mouth, urinary retention) and blurred vision, photophobia, heart dysrhythmias, hypotension, confusion, memory loss, and sedation. The nursing implications involved monitoring for such side effects and providing education and symptomatic relief.**

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

**Severe headache, tachycardia, flushing, sweating, fever, anxiety, restlessness, change in LOC**

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

**Educating on avoiding foods containing tyramine and not taking other antidepressant medications, like SSRIs, SNRIs, or other MAOIs, and reporting behavior change or S/Sx to the nurse immediately.**