

## Case Study 4: N.J.

**Bergan Gunter**

### Scenario

N.J. is a 65-year-old widow who lives alone. She has a long history of type 2 diabetes and **hypertension**. N.J. is not employed. She has very limited savings and relies on Social Security benefits for income. She **smokes** about half a pack of cigarettes a day and has been a smoker since she was in her 20s. She drinks alcohol “a couple of times a year, usually a glass of wine at a special dinner.”

N.J. has a sore on her ankle that she has noticed for the last several months. The sore does not hurt much, but she has been unable to get it to heal. The cashier at the convenience store tells her that she should use butter to help heal wounds because the butter keeps the wound moist and helps to enhance healing.

N.J. decides to follow the cashier’s advice and applies butter to her wound for a week. The wound does not seem to be getting any better; in fact, it looks worse. It now has yellowish drainage, and the skin around the wound has become red. Her foot also hurts when she walks on it. N.J. stops the butter treatment and goes to the emergency department.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are the priority nursing diagnoses for N.J.?

The primary nursing diagnoses will be bed rest, antibiotics, and debridement of the wound. Keeping the wound clean is necessary in order to promote healing, especially in a patient who will heal slower.

2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?

Teach the patient that smoking decreases blood flow to the extremities, impairs healing, and can lead to amputation. Teach N.J. about proper foot care as well, and that she should not use butter to try and heal a wound. If she has a wound that is not healing, she should contact her doctor.

3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?

Work with the doctor to create a list of medications that is as small as possible. Also, teach the patient how to find coupon codes to reduce the price of their prescriptions. Contact the case manager to help to learn how to reduce the cost of medical equipment, supplies, and medications. Teaching proper foot care, glycemic control, and cessation of smoking will also help to prevent hospitalization due to a foot wound.

4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?

Follow up care would include inspecting the feet every night for injuries, wearing proper shoes/socks, not soaking feet in water, and an annual exam with a podiatrist.