

Case Study 4: N.J.

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.?
 - Risk for infection due to an unhealed wound and diabetes. Decreased mobility due to painful infected wound.
2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?
 - To not be putting butter on the wound because the moisture on the wound helps grow bacteria and it not allowing the wound to be healed. To educate the patient on how to take the prescribed antibiotics and how to take her insulin and when to take it. Teach her how important it is to have bedrest. Teach her how important it is to try to quit smoking. To make sure and change socks daily and how to keep the wound clean. Lastly, how important it is to eat healthy and exercise once her foot is healed.
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?
 - I would see if the PCP could get an order to consult social workers or case management for Medicare to help N.J. out.
4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?
 - I would expect for the infection to be gone with the antibiotics and to be taking the necessary insulin needed. I would expect for her foot to have a little bit more mobility. I would also expect for maybe a progress towards getting Medicare help.