

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 in ankle sore. The sore draining yellow and becoming red are signs of infection. WBC may also confirm infection. The Priority is to clean wound properly and apply a clean dry dressing.
2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?
Teach patient to always keep the sore clean and dry. When removing dressings, wetting the area with sterile normal saline solution before removal will help the bandage remove at ease by loosening adherents and decreasing pain.
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?
Speak with social worker of any programs that may assist patient with cost. I will also print out pamphlets for patient with assistance programs.
3. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?
N.J. will feel 0 pain from a scale 1 – 10. Sore on ankle will look clean without yellow drainage or redness. Patient will visit HCP often for a check up on her sore until it heals. Since the patient is diabetic it will take longer to heal.