

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.? The priority nursing diagnoses are deficient knowledge of diabetes and risk for impaired skin integrity
2. What discharge teaching will you provide her? I will be telling her that she needs to be checking her feet often as it is common for diabetics to lose sensation in their feet and get wounds. I will also tell her that she should seek treatment for it from the doctor next time.
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget? I could do some research on these things to find out which ones are the cheapest but just as effective as the more expensive options. I could also make sure she gets the proper teaching so that she can be efficient in using what she needs and hopefully spend less on these things.
4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care? I would hope that she sees the importance of coming in and receiving that care in order to keep herself safe and healthy.