

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 is the priority nursing diagnosis for N.J.?
Impaired tissue perfusion related to diabetic ulcer. Risk for infection due to diabetic ulcer
2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?
Wound care education, teaching signs and symptoms of hyper/hypoglycemia. Importance of monitoring blood sugars regularly and medication adherence. Smoking cessation. Diabetes and HTN management.
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?
Consult with social workers to help with medication assistance and supplies. Look for coupons online and patient medication assistant programs.
4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?
Patient might not want to come to follow up care because she might not have the money for follow up visits.