

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.? Infection: giving antibiotic and making sure she understands to take the antibiotic until it is done.
2. What discharge teaching will you provide her? I will teach her to take her antibiotics until she is done with it; I will also teach her basic foot care needs since she is a diabetic and is more at risk of getting a diabetic foot ulcer.
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget? I will speak to her case manager about getting her some assistance for medication and also seek out a church to help her.
4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care? N.J. will have to come back so we can look at her foot ulcer and determine if it is getting better or worse.