

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 related to lack of sensation in feet
2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?
 - Smoking cessation
 - Importance of wearing closed toed shoes
 - importance of daily foot care
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?
 - speak to case management about financial assistance programs or community resources to help with equipment and costs
 - speak to physicians about needing medications prescribe at discharge that aren't too expensive
4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?
 - follow up closely with a wound care specialist and home health to assure she has enough support at home