

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 twenties. 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 your immediate plan of care?
2. What immediate concerns do you have for this patient? What about long-term?
3. What additional information would you like regarding N.J.?
4. Why is N.J. having trouble healing this wound?
5. Why doesn't the sore “hurt much”?
6. What discharge teaching will you provide her?
7. Name 3 barriers N.J. faces. What are 3 advantages she has?
8. How can you advocate for N.J.?
9. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?