

How can I help (continued)

- Bring in familiar objects from home pictures, blankets, etc.
- Talk about current events and what is going on around them
- Talk with the healthcare team about the patient's likes and dislikes
- Bring in word puzzles, magazines, newspapers
- Bring in a calendar for longer stays in the hospital
- Make sure the patient gets to the bathroom regularly
- Tell a member of the healthcare team if you notice any symptoms of delirium. Family members are often the first to notice changes



Learn more about delirium at
<http://thisisnotmymom.ca/>

Important things to remember

- Delirium is common and usually temporary
- Symptoms can come and go, often increase at night and can take days or weeks to resolve
- Family members and caregivers play an important role in caring for a person with delirium
- Delirium can be a scary experience for you and your loved ones. Talking to a healthcare provider can help you understand what is happening

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DELIRIUM

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A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS, FAMILY
MEMBERS & CAREGIVERS

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WHAT IS DELIRIUM?

Delirium is a temporary state of confusion. It is important to remember that it is not dementia.

It develops quickly (within hours or days) and can sometimes take weeks to clear.

Unfortunately, some people suffering from delirium do not return to their original state of health.

Delirium is a common, serious, and often preventable problem in hospitalized older adults. Delirium can slow patient recovery and requires immediate treatment.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR DELIRIUM?

People who:

- Are 65 or older
- Have dementia or depression
- Are dependent on others
- Have problems with vision or hearing
- Are not eating or drinking well
- Take multiple medications
- Have multiple medical conditions
- Are having surgery
- Spend time in the ICU
- Have a past history of delirium

PATIENTS WITH DELIRIUM MAY

Be agitated, stressed, or anxious

Look depressed and withdrawn

Have difficulty focusing on what is happening around them

Be confused about daily events, daily routines, and who people are

Say things that do not make sense

Experience changes in personality or behavior

Seeing or hearing things that are not really there

Think that people are trying to harm them

Be up all night and can sleep all day

Have symptoms can come and go over the course of a day

HOW CAN I HELP A LOVED ONE WHO IS DELIRIOUS?

- Have a family member or friend stay with the patient as much as possible. Take shifts if you have a large family.
- Help maintain a quiet and peaceful setting
- Make sure the lighting is good and appropriate for the time of day
- Play soothing music that the patient enjoys
- Make sure glasses are clean and fit well
- Make sure hearing aids are worn and that batteries are fully charged
- Talk with the healthcare team about safe exercise and activities for the patient
- Help the patient with sitting and walking, as even a few days in bed can cause muscle weakness
- Help with meals and bring favorite snacks
- Offer fluids often
- Update the white board in the patient's room with the correct date
- Speak slowly and clearly and use simple sentences about familiar & pleasant topics
- Be patient, do not argue
- Be calm and reassuring