



Delirium: Spot It, Support It, Stop It

Delirium is often preventable. Small actions can help lower your risk.

What is Delirium?

Delirium is a serious medical condition that causes a sudden change in thinking or awareness. It comes on quickly, and symptoms can come and go throughout the day.



Did You Know?



1 in 5 older adults experience symptoms of delirium in hospital



Up to **40%** of delirium cases are preventable



Delirium increases the average length of stay in hospital by **8 days**



Dementia increases delirium risk **~2-5x** in hospitalized older adults

Common Causes



Infection or fever



Medication changes



Dehydration or poor nutrition



Pain and emotional distress



Acute medical illness or post-surgery



Poor sleep or changes in routine

Signs to Watch For



Feeling confused or having memory problems



Feeling restless, agitated, or unusually alert



Trouble peeing or pooping



Feeling sleepy, sluggish, or unusually quiet



Seeing or hearing things that aren't there



Unsteady walking or increased falls



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Ways to Help Prevent Delirium:

This is general guidance and may vary based on each patient and their care team's advice.



Stay active with short walks, sitting up for meals and light exercise



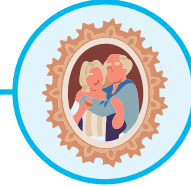
Eat and drink regularly



Keep lights on by day, dim at night



Use clocks and calendars to stay oriented



Use familiar items and photos to support conversation



Wear your hearing aids and glasses

Ways to Support Someone with Delirium:



Try not to argue. Be patient, calm, and reassuring



Limit daytime naps



Play soft, familiar music



Speak clearly in short simple sentences



Ask if they need anything to feel more comfortable

Speak up if you notice changes in your loved one—even if no one asks.

Treatment and Recovery



Your care team will work with you to support a calm and comfortable environment. They will monitor you closely for changes in behaviour and work on understanding and addressing any underlying causes.



Scan here for more resources on Delirium