

For the Caregiver

Help with Delirium in the Hospital



Delirium: Confusion that comes on very fast, sometimes in just a few hours.

What you should know

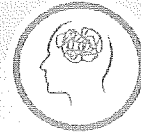
- A person with delirium cannot think clearly, has trouble paying attention and is not aware of what is going on around him/her
- A person with delirium can see or hear things that are not really there
- Delirium usually clears up after a few days to weeks
- Delirium can be caused by medications, medical illness and hospitalization for medical procedures
- A person with dementia is at higher risk for developing delirium

What you can do

If your loved one is going to the hospital, the best thing you can do to help is to work together with the doctors and nurses to prevent delirium.

For the Caregiver

More Help with Delirium at the Hospital



If your loved one is going to the hospital...

What can you do to help prevent delirium?

Alert the doctors and nurses if your loved one has been confused because of illness or medications in the past or if you notice:

- Signs of pain or constipation
- Any unusual behavior

Help your loved one to stay oriented to time and place

- Bring glasses and hearing aids to the hospital
- Encourage your loved one to stay awake during the day
- Keep a light on in your loved one's room during daylight
- Gently remind your loved one several times per day of the date, time, where he/she is and the reason for the hospitalization
- Keep a clock and calendar in your loved one's room

Help your loved one feel calmer

- Bring personal items to the hospital
- Sit with your loved one as much as possible
- Offer warm milk or a gentle back rub before bedtime

For the Caregiver

Help with Delirium at Home



If your loved one develops delirium in the hospital, he/she will need special care when returning home.

Your loved one needs at least 4-6 hours of uninterrupted sleep at night.

If your loved one is having trouble sleeping try:

- Decreasing noise at night
- Providing a warm drink of milk before bedtime
- Offering your loved one a back rub for 10-15 minutes before bedtime
- Encourage your loved one to stay awake during the day

Help your loved one to stay oriented to time and place

- Gently remind your loved one several times per day about the date, time and surroundings
- Keep a clock and a calendar inside your loved one's bedroom
- Make sure your loved one has his/her glasses or hearing aids
- Keep a light on in your loved one's bedroom during daylight

For the Caregiver

More Help with Delirium at Home



When your loved one comes home from the hospital:

- Make sure he/she is taking the right medications, in the right dose, at the right time
 - Medications may have been started or stopped when your loved one was in the hospital
 - If you have any questions, contact your loved one's doctor or nurse immediately

- Watch for signs that your loved one is in pain or is constipated

- Notify the hospital staff if your loved one is showing symptoms of pain or constipation or exhibiting any unusual behavior