

What can I do to help?

Promote physical activity

- Encourage being up: sitting and walking.
- Have chair and bed are at a comfortable height.
- Have walking aids near by
- Talk to the health care provider about exercise and activities.
- Minimize the risk for falls.

Promote mental stimulation

- Too many visitors at once can be confusing and overwhelming. Plan the visits
- Let visitors know what to expect due to delirious state.
- Talk about current events and surroundings.
- Provide date and time reminders
- Play favourite music.
- Read out loud; try large print or talking books.
- Provide newspapers, magazines or puzzles.
- Provide gentle reminders about where they are and what is happening.
- Do not argue when the person is wrong



What can I do to help?

Promote healthy hearing and vision

- Use hearing aides and clean glasses.
- If you notice a new problem with hearing even with a working hearing aid ask for an assessment.
- Provide proper lighting.
- Consider using a magnifying glass.

Promote good communication

- Speak clearly, facing the person.
- Minimize other noise.
- Avoid shouting.
- Keep sentences short and simple.
- Use body language and gestures.

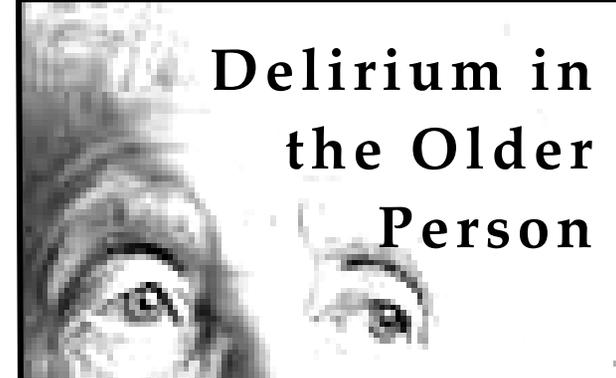
Promote hydration & healthy eating

- Offer fluids often.
- Encourage and help with eating.
- Promote good posture.
- Encourage slow paced eating & drinking.
- Report frequent coughing or choking with food or fluids.

Promote healthy rest and sleep

- Keep light low or off when resting.
- Increase comfort with a pillow, blanket, warm drink or back rub.
- Avoid caffeine after 3pm.
- Do not use sleeping pills if possible.

“My family member is not usually like this.”



What is Delirium?

- **Delirium is a sudden, temporary onset of confusion that causes changes in how people think and behave.**
- **Older people are most at risk.**
- **Delirium can be prevented and treated. If not treated it can be serious.**
- **Delirium is not Dementia.**
- **Once a person has had Delirium they are at greater risk of getting it again.**

When is someone at risk?

An older adult is more likely to get delirium if he or she has:

- Had delirium before
- Memory or thinking problems
- Had a recent hospitalization
- Not been drinking enough fluids
- Problems with seeing or hearing

What does Delirium look like?

- ✓ People with delirium often have fluctuating confusion and may:
 - ✓ have trouble paying attention
 - ✓ be restless and upset
 - ✓ slur their speech
 - ✓ not make any sense
 - ✓ see or hear imaginary things
 - ✓ mix up days and nights
 - ✓ drift between sleep and wakefulness
 - ✓ be forgetful
 - ✓ have trouble concentrating
 - ✓ not know where they are
 - ✓ have trouble staying awake
- ✓ be sometimes confused and then okay

How long has problem been present?

Tell a health care team member if you notice any signs of Delirium. Continue to monitor at home, as Delirium can reoccur. Keep track of any changes that occur.

What can cause Delirium?

There are many causes of delirium and often there is more than one.

Possible causes include:

- Infection
- Medication side-effects including over the counter and herbal remedies
- Not taking medications as prescribed
- Recent surgery with anesthetic
- Worsening of an existing illness
- Not eating or taking in enough fluids as usual - dehydration
- Poor fitting hearing aids or glasses
- High or low blood sugar
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Pain
- Alcohol use or withdrawal
- A recent injury or fall
- Recent move or hospitalization
- Grief or recent loss

How is Delirium diagnosed ?

- Noticing the signs of delirium
- Physical examination
- Blood, urine and X-ray tests
- Understanding of the person's medical history, and regular habits

If treated promptly Delirium may be reversed

Will my family member return to normal?

Delirium often clears in a few days or weeks. Some problems with memory may persist. It is possible that a delirious state may reveal other memory problems.

How can I support the move back home?

Do you need help at home?

Ask the health care team to refer you to Home and Community Services if you need help.

Are there any new health problems?

- Is there anything I need to do?
- Are there any changes in the medications? Are there side effects that I need to watch for?
- What do I do if I see side effects?

Delirium can occur at home.

Monitor your loved one for signs by using the checklist provided on the left side.

Try to arrange for family members to visit at different times throughout the day. Let visitors know what to expect prior to visiting along with suggestions included on the back of this brochure.