



DRAFT

Help Prevent Another Episode

You may be able to help prevent another episode of delirium. Here's how:

1. Provide their favorite photo, blanket or pillow.
2. Encourage other family members and friends to visit.
3. Use large clocks and calendars.
4. Keep a consistent routine.
5. Make sure their dosage and timing of medications is consistent.
6. Check to make sure their dentures, hearing aids or eyeglasses are working properly.
7. Play calming, familiar music.
8. Make sure they are getting enough sleep.

Delirium is a serious treatable condition. Your healthcare providers are here to help. If you need a physician, call our physician referral line at 301-774-8881.

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 Medical Center

18101 Prince Philip Dr.
 Olney, MD 20832
 301-774-8881 **PHYSICIAN REFERRAL**



Delirium

What is Delirium?

Delirium is when a person becomes suddenly confused and disoriented. It can happen at any age, but it is most common for people older than 65.

Delirium is a sign of a serious treatable condition, not a disease. It is a treatable medical condition for which there can be many causes, including:

- Sudden or severe illness
- Infection
- Dehydration
- Fever
- Constipation
- Drug or alcohol withdrawal
- Recent hospital stay or move
- Loss of loved one
- Sleep deprivation
- Medication side effects
- Change in medication
- Recent surgery with anesthesia
- Worsening of a chronic disease
- Pain
- Recent fall or injury
- Too much or too little of some minerals in the blood, i.e. glucose, sodium

Patients may develop delirium if they have suffered from dementia, a brain injury, stroke, bad vision/hearing, or mental health concerns.

Are You Worried About Your Loved One?

Do you find yourself thinking: *“He isn’t usually like this?”*

Delirium is a sign of a serious treatable condition.

Don’t brush off this feeling by saying to yourself: *“Oh, it’ll be OK. Maybe he was just having a rough day.”*

Trust your instincts. Delirium needs to be promptly addressed by a member of a healthcare team.

Delirium often goes unrecognized and untreated. Family members and friends can make a difference in getting effective treatment for their loved one by calling their doctor.

Common Signs of Delirium

Is your loved one ...

- Thinking unclearly
- Unable to pay attention
- Unaware of their surroundings
- Seeing or hearing things that aren’t there
- Unable to recognize you
- Saying strange things

Additional signs may include:

- Agitation, anxiety or unusual, aggressive behavior
- Severe sleepiness or unusually quiet
- New resistance to help from doctors

How You Can Help

It’s normal to feel scared watching your loved one be confused and disoriented. There are ways you can help.

If you suspect your loved one is starting to suffer from delirium, here are a few things you can do:

1. Record the time and date when the change was noticed.
2. Speak in a calm, soothing voice and tell your loved one where they are and remind them who you are.
3. Find the list of your loved one’s medications to give to the doctor or nurse.
4. Turn off the TV or loud music.
5. Avoid sudden movements.
6. Encourage them to put on their glasses or hearing aids, and put in dentures.
7. Encourage them to use the bathroom, if necessary.
8. Encourage an increase in activity. Use diversions such as going for a walk together.
9. Provide a warm blanket if he or she is cold.
10. Provide food or water if he or she is allowed to eat or drink.
11. Contact their doctor.