

How common is delirium?

About one in four older people admitted to hospital will experience delirium.

How long does delirium last?

Delirium usually lasts for 7-14 days. It can take up to six months for all the symptoms to resolve.

Will delirium recur?

For many people it is only a once off occurrence. However, people who have experienced delirium do have a higher risk of experiencing it again.



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Delirium

Information for patients



Interpreter Services

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at no charge. Please contact our staff for assistance.



What is delirium?

Delirium is a syndrome of acute confusion, fluctuating level of consciousness and perceptual disturbances, usually precipitated by insults, such as medical problems, a change of medication or a change of environment.

Symptoms of delirium

Symptoms can happen very quickly. They may include any of the following:

- Feeling different from your normal self
- Seeing or hearing things that others may not see or hear
- Change in mood (feeling sad, angry, fearful or upset)
- Not knowing the time of day or where you are
- Feeling confused and forgetful
- Staying awake in the night and sleeping during the day

Things that may help during an episode of delirium:

- Having items from home like photos, favourite blanket or clothing items
- Having someone with you when walking and standing
- Keeping normal sleeping and waking cycles
- Getting natural sunlight during the day
- Having others speak quietly, softly and clearly
- Eating and drinking sufficiently

Things you can do to reduce the risk of delirium:

- Stay mentally and physically active
- Keep hydrated
- Spend time in the sunlight
- Talk to someone when you are not feeling like yourself or are feeling unwell
- Maintain good hygiene
- Take medication as recommended by your doctor
- Have medications reviewed regularly
- Avoid alcohol

