



MAJOR NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDERS: DEMENTIA

Programme régional ambulatoire de gériatrie (PRAG)

DELIRIUM



WHAT IS A DELIRIUM?

Delirium is a condition that causes confusion and/or a sudden or unusual change in behavior that develops quickly, but does not last if treated.

The person may :

- ❖ have incoherent conversations
- ❖ experience hallucinations
- ❖ become disoriented
- ❖ no longer able to recognize loved ones.

Delirium is not a diagnosis of Dementia. However, those who have dementia are at increased risk to develop a delirium.

The condition usually improves within a few days and the delirium disappears within two weeks with appropriate interventions. However, in some people, the duration may be extended.



WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE CAUSES?

Some causes can be identified in the environment or in the person directly. When your loved one is agitated, he or she may be trying to communicate with you through his or her behavior to indicate that something is wrong.

It is possible to observe :

- ❖ If they feel hungry, thirsty or needs to use the bathroom.
- ❖ If they are in pain or discomfort.
- ❖ Tired, bored.
- ❖ Anxious, angry or sad
- ❖ If there is too much stimulation in the environment (noise, brightness, too many people at the same time)
- ❖ **Acute health problem** (pain, cough, constipation, infection, etc.) consult a doctor or nurse.



HOW TO PREVENT / RESPOND?

**First, take a moment to review the document
"The Adapted Approach"**

- ❖ If you are concerned that your loved one has a physical health problem, seek medical/nursing advice quickly. Info santé at 811 can guide you.
- ❖ Stay calm. The person may react to your own nervousness.
- ❖ Check to see if your loved on is hungry or thirsty, in pain, or needs to use the bathroom.
- ❖ Be aware of fatigue levels (yawning, drowsiness, irritability).
- ❖ Establish a stable, consistent routine: do the same things at the same times.
- ❖ Keep a calm and suitable environment: reduce the surrounding stimulation (radio, television, strong light, etc.).
- ❖ Avoid setting the person up for failure. ("Come on! Don't you remember? I told you that two minutes ago!").
- ❖ Practice moving activities (walking, dancing) with the person if their physical condition allows.

In the event that your loved one exhibits behaviors that concern you, do not hesitate to contact:

- **Info-Santé/Info-Social 811**
- **Your assigned worker at the CLSC**
- **Discussion with the health care team**
- **A doctor**

The proposed strategies are suggestions for possible solutions to explore. Be creative and adapt them to your loved one, because you know your loved one the best!

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