



Hip fracture: Becoming confused

Is the person you care for talking or behaving strangely? Or are they unusually still and quiet? Then they could be suffering from a condition called 'delirium'. This can seriously affect how well they recover, so please talk to staff as soon as possible if you're concerned.

If your loved one has previously been diagnosed with dementia, staff may assume that this is the cause of their unusual behaviour. So be sure to let staff know if they don't normally behave in this way.

Delirium is a temporary problem that can occur after a broken hip or any operation on an older person, especially if they already have difficulties with their memory.

Other causes of delirium include:

- being in pain.
- the side-effects of painkillers or other medications.
- changes to someone's usual medication.
- being in an unfamiliar place or changes to normal, daily routine.
- missing out on meals.
- fear and injury because of a fall.
- worry about getting to the toilet.
- constipation and incontinence.
- suddenly stopping alcohol or smoking.
- dehydration and kidney problems.
- being short of breath or oxygen.
- oxygen masks, catheters and drips.
- infections including chest and urine infections.

How to spot delirium

You know your loved one better than any member of staff and may be able to spot changes in their behaviour that other people may not notice. Watch out for the following:

- confusion that varies during the day and/or has started suddenly
- inability to follow a conversation
- slurred speech
- agitation or restlessness
- drowsiness and slow reactions

- mood swings
- nightmares
- paranoia
- hallucinations.

How you can help

- Offer reassurance and familiarity
- Stay calm and explain what's happening using short, simple sentences, repeating what you say if necessary.
- Remind them of the time and date and make sure that they can see a clock and/or a calendar.
- Bring in some familiar objects from home.
- Help them with familiar activities such as eating and drinking.
- Make sure their glasses are clean and their hearing aids are in working order.

If you would like more information about delirium then visit the [Alzheimer's Society website](#) which also offers advice and support.