

Is Your Loved One Confused?

- If your loved one is confused, they may have a medical condition called delirium. Delirium causes problems with thinking and understanding. It is **not** the same as dementia.
 - › About 2 out of 3 patients in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) will get delirium.
- Delirium starts fast and usually goes away in a few days or weeks.
- The ICU health care team regularly checks patients for symptoms of delirium.



What are the symptoms?

- › Being confused or forgetful, not able to think clearly
 - › Being less able to focus or understand
 - › Not knowing the right time and place, or understanding what is happening around them
 - › Slow or slurred speech
 - › Changes in behaviour
 - › Being very tired
 - › Seeing, hearing, or feeling things that are not real. These are called hallucinations.
 - › Sudden changes in emotions (like feeling sad, angry, upset, anxious)
 - › Being restless, agitated (upset), or withdrawn
 - › Not trusting others
- A person with delirium may have some or all of these symptoms. Symptoms are often worse at night.

Tell a member of your loved one's health care team if they are:

- › in pain or are not comfortable.
- › restless or if their behaviour changes.

- Talk to the health care team if your loved one is not themselves.
- Remind your loved one of the day, date, and where they are.
- Bring them their glasses and hearing aids, if needed.
- Decorate their room with calendars, personal items, and family photos.
- Talk about family, friends, and other familiar topics.



For more information, ask a member of your loved one's health care team for pamphlet 2433 *Delirium in the Intensive Care Unit – QE II*.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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