

When Confusion Can Be Dangerous

New or worsening confusion is not a normal part of aging; it could be delirium. Delirium symptoms can be similar to dementia and are most often noticed in the hospital by family and friends.

Delirium

- Happens quickly within hours or days
- New changes in confusion or behaviors
- Can come and go
- Can usually be reversed

Causes of Delirium

- Severe illness or injury
- Changes in the body's chemical processes
- Medications
- Surgery
- Infection
- Alcohol or other drug withdrawal

Consequences of Delirium

- Increased worry or being upset
- Becoming withdrawn

What can you do if you notice symptoms?

- ✓ Immediately share your concerns with a healthcare provider
- ✓ Keep a list of medications and surgeries
- ✓ Note when symptoms began and how they are different from the person's typical behavior

Dementia

- Develops over months to years
- Memory loss
- Impairments in language and judgement
- Gets worse over time

Delirium Symptoms - Difficulty with:

- Staying focused
- Thinking clearly
- Understanding surroundings
- Remembering recent events

ABOUT REACH

REACH is dedicated to improving the quality of care for Florida's older adults. The Florida State University College of Medicine, Department of Geriatrics has been federally funded since 2015 to work with a variety of local, state, and national partners to enhance Florida's workforce that cares for older adults. Please visit our website to learn more.

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