

PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Being admitted to hospital can be a worrying and unsettling time. If you have any concerns or questions you should speak to a member of staff in the ward or department who will do their best to reassure you. If you are not happy with their response, you can ask to speak to someone in charge.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Our PALS staff will provide advice and can liaise with staff on your behalf if you feel you are unable to do so. They will also advise you what to do if your concerns have not been addressed. If you wish to discuss making a formal complaint PALS can provide information on how to do this. Telephone: 0300 123 1732. Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 4.30pm. Friday 8.30am to 4pm.

An answerphone operates outside office hours. Or email us at: wah-tr.PET@nhs.net

Feedback

Feedback helps us highlight good practice and where we need to improve. There are lots of ways you can give feedback including completing a Friends and Family Test card or undertaking a survey. For further information please speak to a member of staff, see our Patient Experience leaflet or visit www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/contact-us

If you would like this leaflet in an alternative language or format, such as audio or braille, please ask a member of staff.

Polish

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem niniejszej ulotki w innej wersji językowej lub formacie, prosimy zwrócić się w tej sprawie do członka naszego personelu.

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই পত্রিকাটির অন্য ভাষায় বা ফর্ম্যাটে খেতে চান যেমন, অডিও বা ব্রেলি তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে সদস্য বা কর্মীকে জ্ঞাত করুন।

Urdu

اگر اس کاپیور کی آپ کسی متبادل زبان یا بیٹھ جیسے آڈیو یا برون میں چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Romanian

Pentru a obține această broșură în altă limbă sau în alt format (de audio sau limbajul Braille), vă rugăm să apelați la un membru al personalului.

Portuguese

Caso deseje este folheto numa língua ou formato alternativos, tal como ficheiro áudio ou em Braille, por favor dirija-se a um dos nossos funcionários.

Chinese (Mandarin)

如果您需要本手册的替代语言或格式的版本，如音频或盲文，请向工作人员咨询。



**Worcestershire
Acute Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Delirium

Patient Information

WHAT IS DELIRIUM?

Delirium is a common condition that affects patient's thoughts and behaviours for a period of time. More than half of patients admitted to hospital become delirious at some time during their stay. Delirium often has many causes, which can make it difficult to recognise and treat. There is often more than one cause and sometimes the cause is not found. It can be distressing and frightening for patients and for their friends and relatives.

CAUSES

Pain

Infection

Neurological conditions

Constipation / urinary retention

Hypo and hyper states

Medication

Environment

WHO IS AT RISK OF DELIRIUM?

People Who:

- Are Older – The risk increases with age
- Have Dementia/Cognitive decline
- Have had recent surgery
- Have neurological problems such as stroke, Parkinson's disease or a head injury
- Are dehydrated
- Have an infection
- Take lots of different medications
- Consume excessive amounts of alcohol or take illegal drugs
- Are severely ill
- Have poor hearing or eyesight
- Are nearing the end of their life

OTHER INFORMATION

The following organisations / websites provide information that you may find useful.

The Alzheimer's Society provides advice and support on all forms of dementia.

Helpline Tel: 0300 222 11 22

Worcestershire Office Tel: 01905 621 887

Email: worcestershire@alzheimers.org.uk

Carers UK provides information and support for carers

Tel: 020 7378 4999

Website: www.carersuk.org

Worcester Association of Carers provides information and support for local family's and their carers

Tel: 0300 12 4272

Website: www.carersworcs.org.uk

Age UK provides advice, support and information for older people

Worcester Office

Tel: 0800 008 6077 **Email:** office@ageukhw.org.uk

National Office

Tel: 0800 678 1174 **Website:** www.ageuk.org.uk

IS IT THE SAME AS DEMENTIA?

No. Delirium is not the same as dementia, although people living with dementia are more likely to get delirium.

Dementia is a longer term loss of memory and other aspects of thinking, which usually progresses over time.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO HAVE DELIRIUM?

You may:

- Be less aware of what is going on around you
- Being disorientated to time and place
- Be unable to follow a conversation or to speak clearly
- Have vivid dreams, which are often frightening and may carry on when you wake up
- Find that your mind plays "tricks" on you e.g. Hear things when there is nothing or no one to cause them and/or see people or objects which aren't there
- Worry that other people are trying to harm you
- Be very agitated or restless, unable to sit still and wandering about
- Be very slow or sleepy
- Sleep during the day but wake up at night
- Have moods that change quickly; you can be frightened, anxious, depressed or irritable
- Be more confused at some times than at others – often in the evening or at night

WHY IS IT FRIGHTENING?

Delusions and hallucinations are often frightening. Delirium itself can also cause anxiety or fear.

DELUSIONS are false beliefs that the individual is convinced are true. The person may think that someone is trying to harm them; that people are not who they say they are or that the surroundings have been altered. The beliefs can be quite short lived, or change a lot from time to time. For the individual suffering them these thoughts they have are very real. They can bring on suspicion, mistrust or accusations towards family, friends or hospital staff. Afterwards it can be difficult to separate what was real from what was not.

HALLUCINATIONS are usually visions but can also be voices or skin sensations. They may be formed and moving (like insects, animals or people) or sometimes shapes or lights. The visions may merge with real objects or appear to come out of walls, curtains or pictures and are often worse at night.

HOW CAN I HELP SOMEONE WITH DELIRIUM?

You can help someone with delirium feel calmer and more in control if you:

- Stay calm.
- Talk to them in short, simple sentences.
- Check that they have understood you - repeat things if necessary.
- Try not to agree with any unusual or incorrect ideas but tactfully disagree or change the subject.
- Reassure them.
- Remind them of what is happening and how they are doing.
- Remind them of the time and date.
- Try to make sure that someone they know well is with them. This is often most important during the evening when confusion often gets worse.
- If they are in hospital bring in some familiar objects from home.
- Make sure they have their glasses and hearing aid.
- Help them to eat and drink.
- Have a light on at night so that they can see where they are if they wake up.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET BETTER?

Delirium gets better when the cause is treated. You can recover very quickly but it can take several days, weeks or longer in some cases.

People with dementia can take a particularly long time to get over delirium. Once you've had one episode of delirium you are more likely to get it again if you become medically unwell.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any specific concerns that you feel have not been answered and need explaining please speak with the Doctor or Nurse in Charge.

If you feel that your concerns have not been addressed you can ask to see a manager or matron. If you still have concerns our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can provide you with independent support and advice.

PALS is contactable on 0300 123 1733.

If you wish to make a formal complaint you can:

Write to our Chief Executive at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust,
Charles Hastings Way, Worcester
WR5 1DD

Or

Contact our Complaints Team on 0300 123 1732 or by email at Wah-trPET@nhs.net