



Comprehensive Care

Think about the link

Preventing delirium

About delirium

- Delirium is a serious condition that is associated with a high risk of morbidity and mortality
- 10% of patients 70 years and over have delirium on admission to hospital
- ≤ 50% experience delirium at some time during hospitalisation
- 50% of delirium is unrecognised or misdiagnosed in hospital
- Patients with dementia are six more times likely to develop delirium
- Delirium is easier to prevent than treat; it is estimated that 30-40% of cases are preventable
- Think about the link - patients with delirium experience more pressure injuries, falls and ongoing cognitive impairment



How can I provide Comprehensive Care to prevent delirium?

Conduct a risk assessment

- Identify the key risk factors
- Screen all patients over the age of 18 years using the 4AT as part of the Comprehensive Risk Assessment on admission and at bedside nursing handover (TDS), or if any change in your patients' condition
- Regularly monitor cognitive function for a change in behaviour or thinking

Develop a prevention plan

- Provide your patients with delirium-specific preventive interventions from the multidisciplinary team
- Complete the 'About Me Form' as an individualised care plan tailored to meet your patients' goals according to their needs and values

- Implement specific nursing interventions to prevent falls and pressure injuries
- Monitor your patients' vital signs in order to recognise and respond to an acute deterioration

Deliver the prevention plan

- Encourage eating and drinking
- Optimise sleeping patterns
- Encourage safe mobility
- Conduct pain assessments
- Manage constipation, dehydration and malnutrition
- Provide regular reorientation and reassurance
- Conduct medication reviews, including antipsychotics
- Monitor the effectiveness of delirium prevention strategies

Where can I learn more about preventing delirium?

- Welearn module on the intranet
- Nursing Flow Charts in EMR and on the intranet
- Delirium Guidelines
- Clinical Nurse Consultant for Delirium