What is Delirium?
Delirium is sudden onset of confusion or a sudden worsening of confusion in someone with dementia.

What Does Delirium Look Like?
People with delirium can act confused and have trouble paying attention.

They may also:
- Be restless and upset
- Have trouble waking up and staying awake
- Not make sense
- See and hear imaginary things
- Mix up days and nights
- More forgetful than usual
- Be disoriented

Patients suffering from delirium can have symptoms that come and go over the course of a day. They can look quite “with it” at times only to be very confused later in the day.

What Is Wrong With My Mother?
Delirium Signs and Symptoms

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Is Delirium Dangerous?
Delirium can result in:
• Longer hospital stays
• More nursing home admissions
• Decreased ability to care for self
• Lowered mental abilities
• Falls and injuries
• Shorter life expectancy

How Does Someone Get Delirium?
Many things can increase the chance for developing delirium.
• Some medications can increase the risk
• An infection
• Not eating or drinking enough
• Poor hearing, poor vision
• Lack of sleep
• Pain
• Bed rest
• Dementia
• Depression
• Old age
• Surgery
• Others

How Can I Help a Love One With Delirium?
Describe a normal day in your loved one’s life, and tell the nurses what seems different about their behavior
• Tell the doctors and nurses about any new medication or recent changes in medications
• Have someone from your family stay with the person as much as possible
• Make sure they wear their hearing aids and glasses
• Help them to eat and drink
• Talk about familiar things and do familiar activities
• Keep their window blinds open and room lights on during the day
• Request a geriatric specialist

What is Wrong With My Mother?
“Last night, the nurses asked me to stay with her. Mom kept crawling out of her hospital bed and said she needed to go grocery shopping. I was surprised at her behavior and wondered why she was acting this way. The doctor told me she had delirium”

How Long Can Delirium Last?
• Delirium can last from days to weeks, but can even last for months, or a year or more

How Can I Prevent Delirium From Happening Again?
• Your loved one is always at risk for developing delirium again. Seek medical attention early.
• Each time your loved one is admitted to the hospital, tell the doctors and nurses they have had delirium in the past.
• If you notice any changes in the person’s behavior or thinking ability, report it to the nurse or physician immediately
• Schedule an appointment with a geriatric specialist