

# Potential Causes & Considerations for Delirium

POTENTIAL CAUSE	CONSIDERATIONS
Medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Were any new medications added to patient's regimen?</li> <li>➤ Have there been any recent increases or decreases in dosages?</li> </ul>
Infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Has the patient exhibited fever, urinary, or respiratory symptoms?</li> <li>➤ Is the patient's white blood cell count elevated?</li> </ul>
Dehydration, Electrolyte Imbalances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What are the patient's most recent blood urea nitrogen, creatinine, and sodium levels?</li> </ul>
Lack of Medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Are the patient's symptoms due to withdrawal from medication or alcohol?</li> <li>➤ Are the patient's pain symptoms well controlled?</li> </ul>
Sensory Deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Does the patient have vision or hearing loss?</li> <li>➤ Are the patient's eyeglasses on/and or hearing aids in?</li> </ul>
Intracranial Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Is there evidence of neurological changes (e.g., aphasia, hemiparesis, drowsiness, lethargy)?</li> <li>➤ Has the patient fallen recently?</li> </ul>
Elimination Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Does the patient have urinary retention or incontinence?</li> <li>➤ When was the patient's last bowel movement (i.e., possible fecal impaction)?</li> </ul>
Myocardial/Pulmonary Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Has the patient's cardiopulmonary status (e.g., heart rate, lung sounds, oxygen saturation) changed and assessed?</li> </ul>
Hypo-/Hyperglycemia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Have patient's blood sugar levels been checked?</li> <li>➤ Is there adequate glucose control?</li> </ul>

Note. Adapted from Fick and Mion (2007).