

# Pediatric Delirium

### What is delirium?

Delirium is a sudden change in your child's thinking. This makes it hard for your child to focus, stay alert, or think clearly. These changes can vary throughout the day.

### Who is at risk?

Any child in the hospital may develop delirium.

### How can we help prevent delirium?

Caregivers and hospital staff can help prevent delirium:

- Keep a caregiver at your child's bedside to comfort and reorient your child.
- Help your child sleep better at night:
  - turn down the lights
  - try to keep the room quiet
  - limit screen time
  - group care tasks together (like bedding changes, bathroom trips, and nursing care)
- Help your child during the day:
  - keep window shades up and lights on
  - make sure your child wears their glasses or hearing aids (if needed)
- The medical team will remove lines, tubes, drains, and restraints as soon as possible.
- The care team will help your child move as soon as it is safe.
- Your doctor may ask physical therapy and occupational therapy to work with your child.
- If clinically able, staff will time medications and lab draws to promote good sleep.
- Staff will make sure your child has enough food, fluids and bathroom help.

### How is delirium found?

There are no labs or scans to check for delirium. Doctors and nurses must look for signs and symptoms to diagnose delirium. They may use a special screening tool called the **Cornell Assessment of Pediatric Delirium (CAPD)**. This tool:

- has 8 questions
- a score of 9 or higher means your child may have delirium

## Why is it important to prevent or treat delirium?

Preventing or treating delirium helps your child recover faster and feel better. This includes:

- a shorter stay in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)
- taking off the breathing machine sooner
- lower risk of Post-Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS)

## What is Post Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS)?

Post intensive care syndrome (PICS) may happen to anyone that has spent time in an intensive care unit (ICU), even after discharge from the hospital. The effects of PICS may be:

- physical
- mental
- emotional

Symptoms of PICS may include:

- anxiety
- confusion
- depression
- feeling very tired or weak

This information is not meant to replace the advice of your Healthcare Professional. Be sure to ask questions and discuss your medical condition or any medical treatments with your doctor.