

Restlessness and Agitation Caregiver Resource



What is Restlessness and Agitation?

Restlessness and agitation are common in many patients at end of life and often surprises many family members and caregivers. Restlessness and agitation can be a sign of delirium (also common near end of life) which causes the reduced ability to focus, sustain, or shift attention. Your loved one who is usually calm may suddenly and unexpectedly become restless and agitated, which may leave you feeling helpless. This can look like:

- Constant moving or motion
- Inability to be still, being unsettled, or not able to rest or relax or get comfortable
- Tossing and turning, fidgeting/squirming
- Climbing out of bed
- Sleeplessness
- Irritability
- Increased confusion, disorientation
- Striking out or grabbing others
- Pulling or picking at sheets, covers and clothing
- Yelling or calling out

What you can do to help

- Stay calm.
- Administer prescribed medication as instructed by your care team. Medications are usually necessary to help relieve agitation and restlessness.
- Stay with your loved one as much as possible.
- Speak softly and reassure them, do not argue.
- Calming activities such as: soft music, gentle massage, or hand rub.
- Limit the number of people in the room to 1 or 2.
- Create a peaceful environment: dim the lights, turn off the tv

When should I call Care Dimensions?

- If your loved one is experiencing symptoms of restlessness or agitation
- If your loved one can no longer take their medication and has missed doses
- If you can no longer give your loved one the prescribed medication
- If you have any concerns as a caregiver

Your care team will want to know:

- How long the symptoms have been occurring?
- Is your loved one in a safe place?
- What medications have they received?
- When was the last time your loved one went to the bathroom?
- Is there any unfinished business or spiritual distress?



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Care Dimensions is available 24 hours a day by phone.

If you have further questions, please discuss with your care team, or contact Care Dimensions at 888-283-1722.