

**Quality
Standards**

PATIENT / RESIDENT REFERENCE GUIDE

Behavioural Symptoms of Dementia

Care for Patients in Hospitals and Residents
in Long-Term Care Homes

Let's make our health system healthier



If you or your loved one is living with dementia and experiencing behavioural symptoms...

Patients, residents, families, and health care professionals partnered together on this guide to define what the best care should look like for people living with dementia and experiencing behavioural symptoms such as agitation or aggression. The information in this guide has been created to help patients, residents, families, and caregivers know what to ask for when receiving treatment in a hospital or long-term care home. It is based on the best available research and is designed to help ensure the highest-quality care possible.

You can use this list of recommendations to help you and your health care professionals develop a care plan that works for you. You should use this information to become aware of what high-quality care looks like and to ask informed questions about your care. Care plans can be very different for each person, so it is important to work closely with your health care professionals.

Here are some things to consider if you or a loved one is being treated in a hospital or long-term care home.

Understanding and Planning Your Care

- You should receive an examination and full assessment every time you arrive at or leave a hospital or long-term care home. An assessment means that your care team will want to learn more about you to understand how best to help you. It should include questions about your physical health, your medical history, what medications you're taking, how you spend your time, and how you're feeling.
- A care plan should be created to meet your individual needs. A care plan is a written statement that describes the care you receive, who provides it, and what medications you are on. It is based on your full assessment.
- No changes should be made to your treatments until you have been given information about their benefits and harms and have agreed to these changes. In very rare circumstances, where someone is at risk of being hurt, you might be treated first and then provided with information as soon as possible.
- You should receive care from a team of health care professionals who have been trained to care for people living with dementia.

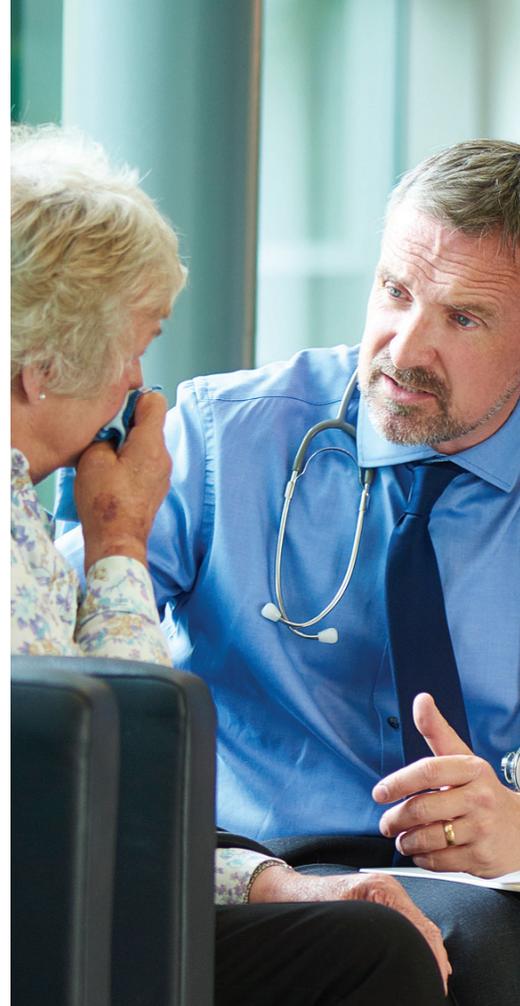
- You should receive care from a team of health care professionals who have been trained to treat symptoms of agitation and aggression.
- You should not be physically restrained.
- Support and information should be provided to your family and other people who care for you so they can help you in the best possible way.
- If needed, you should be transferred to an environment that is calm with minimal noise or activity that disturbs you.
- You should have a smooth transition between care environments.

Medication

- Non-drug treatments should be tried first.
- Medications should be used only if you are in severe distress or if there is a concern you might harm yourself or someone else.
- If they are used, medications should be started at a low dosage and gradually increased until your symptoms improve.
- Your team of health care professionals should help you find the right medication to fit your needs.
- There should be a regular review of your medications to see if the dosage can be reduced or the medications stopped altogether.

Everybody is different, and some recommendations may not apply in your situation. If you have questions about your care, it is important to **speak with your health care professional.**

A more detailed version of this quality standard is available for health care professionals so they can stay current on the newest best evidence. This detailed version is also available to members of the public and can be found on our website.



Looking for more information?

Please see the complete quality standard at www.hqontario.ca and contact us at [qualitystandards@hqontario.ca](https://twitter.com/hqontario) if you have any questions or feedback about this guide.

About Health Quality Ontario

Health Quality Ontario is the provincial advisor on the quality of health care. We are motivated by a single-minded purpose: **Better health for all Ontarians.**

Our quality standards are concise sets of statements outlining the best possible care for patients based on the best available evidence. They are developed in collaboration with clinical experts from across the province and patients and caregivers with lived experience with the condition being discussed.

For more information about Health Quality Ontario and our quality standards, visit: www.hqontario.ca.
