

## What is Delirium?

Delirium is a temporary state of confusion. It is not dementia. Delirium develops quickly (within hours or days) and can sometimes take weeks to clear.

Some people suffering from delirium do not return to their original state of health.

Delirium is a common, serious and often preventable problem in hospitalized older adults. Delirium can slow patient recovery and requires immediate treatment.

### Patients with Delirium May:

- Be agitated, stressed or anxious
- Look depressed and withdrawn
- Have difficulty focusing on what is happening around them
- Be confused about daily events, daily routines, and who people are
- Say things that do not make sense
- Experience changes in personality
- See or hear things that are not really there
- Think that people are trying to harm them
- Be up all night and struggle to sleep during the day
- Have symptoms come and go over the course of a day

## Contact Information

Elder Life Specialist  
Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP)  
705-743-2121 x3321  
elderlife@prhc.on.ca

### Join the HELP Team: Volunteers Needed

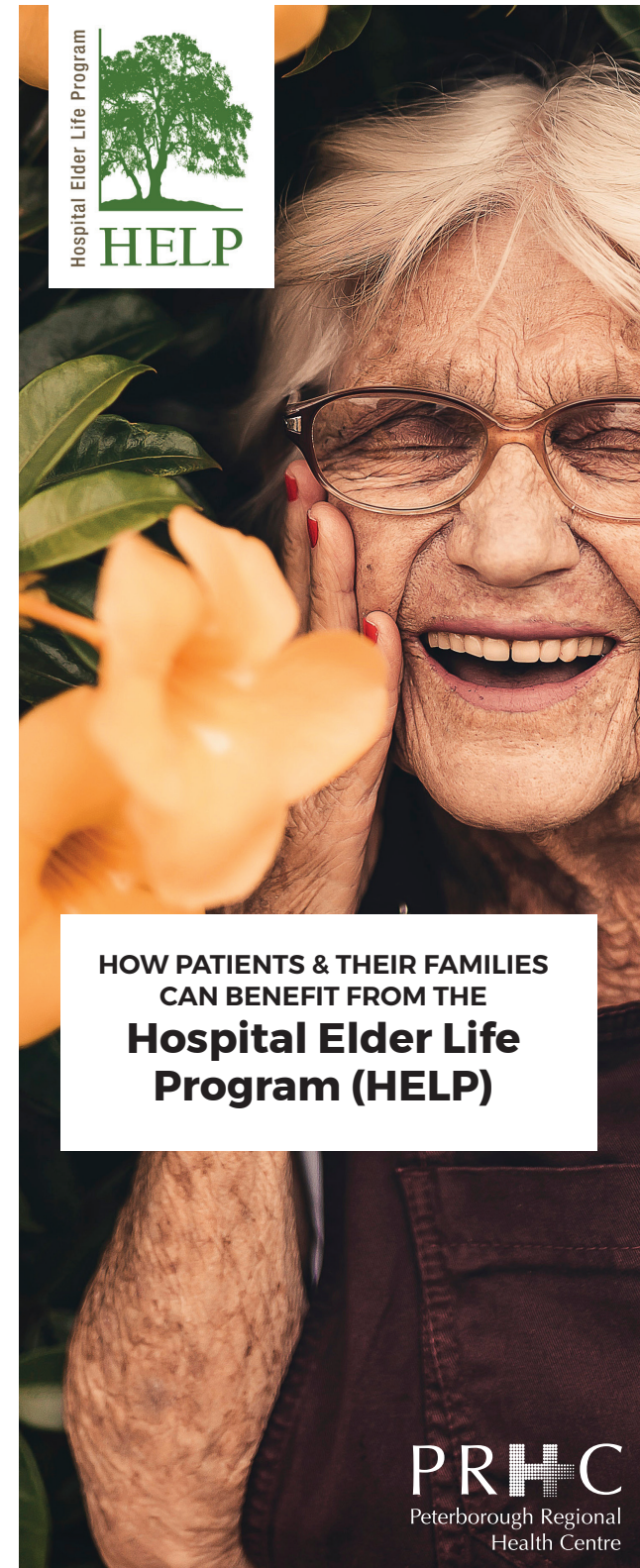
To apply, visit Volunteer Services at [www.prhc.on.ca/cms/volunteers](http://www.prhc.on.ca/cms/volunteers) and complete an application package. Be sure to note on your application that you are interested in joining the HELP team.

Each volunteer will receive free, specialized training in seniors care as well as ongoing coaching and support by the program's Elder Life Specialist.

Accessible versions of this document are available upon request at [elderlife@prhc.on.ca](mailto:elderlife@prhc.on.ca)

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HOW PATIENTS & THEIR FAMILIES  
CAN BENEFIT FROM THE  
**Hospital Elder Life  
Program (HELP)**

## What is the HELP program?

The Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) is an innovative delirium-prevention program designed to improve the hospital experience of older patients. HELP is a new program launching this year that will support Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) in improving the care and service we provide for older patients and their caregivers.

## Goals of HELP

- To maintain the cognitive and physical functioning of patients throughout hospitalization
- To allow patients to be discharged from the hospital as independently as possible
- To prevent unplanned readmissions

## Who is the HELP team?

- Dedicated, specially trained volunteer team
- An Elder Life Specialist, responsible for assessment and leading the program

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*Working together to preserve cognitive and physical function, and promote emotional well-being in older adult patients.*

## Services provided by HELP

### Daily Visitor Program

Volunteers offer 1:1 visits, one (1) to three (3) times per day to provide:

- Orientation
- Stimulation
- Communication
- Social support
- Volunteers ensure that important items are within reach (e.g. hearing aids, glasses, dentures, nurse call button)

### Meal Support

Volunteers assist patients during mealtimes by:

- Cutting food, opening cartons etc.
- Providing companionship
- Encouraging fluid and food intake, where appropriate

### Early Mobilization

- Volunteers encourage patients to remain active within the limitations of their physical condition
- Volunteers provide extra support to get patients moving, as directed by the patient's healthcare team

### Therapeutic Engagement

Volunteers provide interesting activities that keep patients mentally stimulated, including:

- Music
- Reading
- Games
- Puzzles

## A patient in the HELP program at PRHC

- Be 70 years or better
- At risk for delirium
- Have at least one (1) risk factor for cognitive or functional decline:
  - Cognitive impairment
  - Changes in mobility
  - Vision and/or hearing impairment
  - Dehydration/malnutrition risk
- Be able to participate in the program
- Not on droplet or airborne precautions (contact only)

PETERBOROUGH REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

## Seniors' Care Centre of Excellence

At Peterborough Regional Health Centre we promote excellence in seniors' care by meeting the diverse needs of the older adult patients we serve.

Among other Seniors' Care initiatives over the past several years, we have opened a Geriatric Assessment Intervention Network (GAIN) Clinic, a Geriatric Assessment and Treatment Unit (GATU), and a Geriatric Assessment and Behavioural Unit (GABU) at PRHC. The Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) is a new program that will support PRHC in improving the care and service we provide for older patients and their caregivers.

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### Join the HELP Team: **Volunteers Needed**

Volunteers are an important part of the HELP program.

Join our team by reaching out to [volunteers@prhc.on.ca](mailto:volunteers@prhc.on.ca) and mention the HELP program.

Each volunteer will receive free, specialized training in seniors care as well as ongoing coaching and support by the program's Elder Life Specialist.

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Senior Care Centre of Excellence



## How patients and their families can benefit from the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP)

*Working together to preserve cognitive and physical function, and promote emotional well-being in older adult patients.*

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Peterborough Regional  
Health Centre

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