

Nonspecific Symptoms Checklist for Residents with Cognitive Impairment

Nonspecific symptoms are not related to any particular body part or system. Examples include falls, not eating or drinking well, tiredness, weakness, altered mental status, and agitation.

In the past, residents were treated for UTIs or infection due to nonspecific symptoms, but research has shown that infection only causes a SMALL number of nonspecific symptoms. Thus other causes for these symptoms should be explored first.



Nonspecific Symptom Checklist

- Dehydration is common!**
Hydrate orally or parenterally.
If fluid is restricted, request increase in amount of fluids from provider.
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- Review Medications**
Look for new medications, change in dosage, or discontinuation of a medication.
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- Look for signs of respiratory or GI illness.**
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- Check for constipation and other sources of pain.**
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- Look for signs of stress, anxiety, or depression.**
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- If the resident has a history of recurrent UTI, a urine culture may be obtained.**
But do NOT treat unless resident has a fever or meets Loeb criteria for infection.
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- Monitor vital signs for abnormalities.**
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Common Causes of Nonspecific Symptoms

- Dehydration
- New Medication
- Respiratory infection
- GI infection
- Poor Sleep
- Arthritis or other pain
- Constipation/Impaction
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
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