



# Delirium in the Older Person: A Medical Emergency

## Recommended Lab Investigations

In order **to rule out medical problems** that may be causing or contributing to the delirium, the following screening blood work should be done. Tests need to have been done within 3 months; more recent results are preferable.

<u>CBC</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- anemia</li> <li>- blood dyscrasia</li> <li>- infection</li> </ul>
<u>B<sub>12</sub></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pernicious anemia</li> <li>- malabsorption</li> <li>- malnutrition</li> </ul>
<u>Folate</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Malnutrition</li> </ul>
<u>TSH</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hypo/hyperthyroidism</li> </ul>
<u>FBG</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- diabetes</li> </ul>
<u>Bun/Creatinine</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- renal failure</li> <li>- dehydration</li> </ul>
<u>Electrolytes</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dehydration</li> <li>- SIADH (syndrome of inappropriate anti-diuretic hormone or hyponatremia)</li> </ul>
<u>Drug levels</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Digoxin</li> <li>- anticonvulsant</li> <li>- Lithium</li> <li>- Nortriptyline</li> </ul>
<u>Ca/PO<sub>4</sub></u> (calcium, phosphates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hypo/hyperparathyroidism</li> <li>- boney metastases</li> </ul>

### Do these tests to rule out causes of delirium

ESR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- temporal arteritis</li> </ul>
Cortisol Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cushing's</li> </ul>
LFT (Liver Function Tests)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- alcohol abuse</li> </ul>
Chest X Ray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- carcinoma, pneumonia</li> </ul>
EKG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- atrial fibrillation</li> </ul>
O2 sat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- COPD OPD</li> </ul>
CT Scan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- subdural haematoma, meningiomas</li> <li>- normal pressure hydrocephalus</li> </ul>
Urinalysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UTI</li> </ul>
VDRL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- neurosyphilis</li> </ul>

(Reference: Duncan, BC: Seniors Health)