

2-3 Altered mental status v.1.2

Signs may include delirium, unconscious, coma, confusion, speech or motor deficit

START

- 1 **Call for help** (anaesthetist, midwife, obstetrician, +/- medical on-call)
 - ▶ Ask: "who will be the team leader?"
 - ▶ **Team leader assigns** checklist reader and scribe
 - ▶ **Note time**
- 2 **Assess clinical status using ABCDE approach**
 - ▶ Position woman in left lateral (recovery) position
 - ▶ If airway obstructed → perform head tilt/chin lift or jaw thrust
 - ▶ Give oxygen at 15 L/min via reservoir mask, titrate to SpO₂ 95-98%
 - ▶ Start continuous monitoring: SpO₂, respiratory rate, 3-lead ECG and blood pressure
 - ▶ If airway protection indicated → intubate and ventilate
- 3 **Insert wide-bore IV access, take bloods** for FBC, U+E, LFT, clotting, thyroid function, magnesium, venous blood gas and toxicology
- 4 **Assess circulation**
 - ▶ Conventional therapies to treat hypotension, brady- and tachyarrhythmia
- 5 **Measure blood glucose**
 - ▶ If < 4 mmol/L → **(Box A hypoglycaemia)**
- 6 **Check for drug related causes of altered consciousness (Box A)**
 - ▶ Prescribed → check prescription
 - ▶ Non-prescribed → send urine for toxicology
- 7 **Check neurology for signs of stroke (Box B)**
- 8 **Check for other differential diagnoses (Box C)**
- 9 **If diagnosis unclear → urgent CT / MRI head scan**
 - ▶ (Liaise with neurologist and radiologist)

Box A: Drug doses and treatments

Hypoglycaemia (blood glucose < 4 mmol/L)
 20% dextrose 100 ml over 10 minutes IV then recheck blood glucose
 If blood glucose < 4 mmol/L → repeat dextrose
 -or- Glucagon 1 mg IM/IV/SC (once only)

Opioid overdose

Naloxone 0.4-2 mg IV/IM/SC, repeat every 3 minutes PRN

Benzodiazepine overdose

Flumazenil 0.2 mg IV, repeat PRN

Box B: FAST stroke assessment

Facial droop *show me your teeth / smile*
Arm drift *close your eyes, extend arms palms up for 10 seconds*
Speech *repeat this after me...*
Time *a stroke is an emergency, time critical*
 Contact nearest **hyperacute stroke unit**
 Arrange urgent CT / MRI head

Box C: Differential diagnosis

Hypoglycaemia → **(Box A)**
 Drug overdose → **(Box A)**
 Eclampsia → **2.1**
 Severe pre-eclampsia → **2.2**
 Postictal → check epilepsy history
 Stroke → **(Box B)**
 Intracerebral pathology → arrange appropriate imaging
 Sepsis → check history and examination findings
 Hypothermia → check temperature
 Haemorrhage → **2.5** (antepartum) or **2.6** (postpartum)
 Local anaesthetic toxicity → **2.8**
 Electrolyte disturbance (e.g., sodium) → **2.9a** and **2.9b**

Box D: Critical changes

Obstetric cardiac arrest → **1-1**
 Eclampsia → **2-1**