

Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome (NMS)

THINK

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Increased risk of NMS when:

- **Antipsychotic medication** recently started or dosage rapidly increased (but can also occur during long-term treatment on a stable dose).
- Restarting antipsychotic medication in patients with a history of NMS.

Symptoms to look for:

(consider NMS as a possible differential diagnosis even if only a few of these are present)

- Fever
- Diaphoresis (excessive sweating)
- Muscle rigidity
- Confusion
- Dribbling
- Fluctuating consciousness
- Fluctuating blood pressure
- Tachycardia (racing pulse)
- Elevated creatine kinase
- Leukocytosis (raised white cell count – a sore throat is often an indicator)
- Altered liver function tests

Action to take:

- **STOP** antipsychotic medication.
- Monitor vital signs regularly.
- Blood tests: creatine kinase, liver function tests and full blood count.
- Emergency referral to A&E, specifying that NMS is suspected.