



Falling

What is a fall?

- A fall is described as anytime an individual unintentionally comes to rest on the ground, floor, or other lower level.
- An intercepted fall is still a fall.
- A fall without injury is still a fall.
- Anyone found on the floor is assumed to have fallen unless proven otherwise.
- Falls are often complex events, with multiple contributing factors.

What are components of balance?

- Working vestibular system (inner ear).
- Sensory feedback (vision) and sensory input from feet).
- Proprioception (knowing where you are in space).
- Musculo-skeletal and Neuro-muscular function.

Who falls?

- Everyone has potential to fall.
- Falling is not necessarily a normal consequence of aging.
- One third of seniors over 65 will fall every year.
- The incidence increases with advanced age and frailty.
- Up to 50% of those who fall, will fall again.

What are the costs of falls?

- Direct medical cost are estimated to be over \$20,000,000 annually.
- Psycho-social effects include fear of falling, decreased activity, social isolation.
- Falls are often the reason for placement.
- 5% of falls result in fracture.
- 1% of falls result in death.

Why do seniors fall more often?

Intrinsic Factors

- Sensory changes especially to vision.
- Diagnosis affecting strength and gait stability.
- Diagnosis affecting balance and vestibular function.
- Advancing age and frailty especially 80+ years.
- History of falls.
- Side effects of medications and use of multiple medication, 9+.
- Diagnosis affecting cognition.

Extrinsic factors

- Environmental conditions
 - Lighting
 - Clutter
 - Pets
- Change in environment
- Location and accessibility of bathroom
- Footwear

Are there tests to help predict fall risk?

- Timed Up and Go—TUGS
- Functional Reach
- Sit to Stand
- Berg Balance Scale
- Tinetti

What are some strategies to reduce risk of falls?

- Identify risk factors for each individual
- Investigate and identify contributing factors for each fall
- Maintain environment
- Educate all staff
- Maintain a focus on falls
- Promote wellness