

# Screening for falls risk

Ask all patients over 70 years (or their caregivers) 3 simple questions, and get them to perform a simple test, to help identify people at high risk of falling.

- Have you fallen in the past year?
- Do you have difficulty getting around, or with balance?
- Are you afraid of falling?

The Get Up and Go test is a good way to quickly assess mobility, gait, and balance (see over).

Patients who answer “yes” to any of the 3 questions, or have difficulty with gait, mobility or balance when performing the test, require further assessment. Think “HIP”

History

Inspection (physical examination)

Prescription (all medications including OTC and alcohol)

These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating physician based on the individual patient's clinical condition.

# The Get Up and Go Test

## Ask the patient to:

- Stand from a sitting position without using their arms for support
- Walk several paces (10 feet)
- Turn
- Return to the chair
- Sit down again without using their arms for support

## For more information about prevention of falls in the elderly see:

American Geriatrics Society, British Geriatrics Society, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Panel on Falls Prevention. Guideline for the prevention of falls in older persons. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 2001;49:664-72. A 2005 update is available at: [http://www.americangeriatrics.org/education/2006Falls\\_guidelines.shtml](http://www.americangeriatrics.org/education/2006Falls_guidelines.shtml)

Tinetti ME. Clinical practice. Preventing falls in elderly persons. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2003;348(1):42-9.



The Alosa Foundation