Talking With Your Patients About Falls

**If you hear:**

- Falling is just a matter of bad luck.
- My friend down the street fell and ended up in a nursing home.
- I’m worried about falling. Do you think there’s anything I can do to keep from falling?
- I know a fall can be serious. What can I do to keep from falling and stay independent?

**You can say:**

- As we age, falls are more likely for many reasons, including changes in our balance and how we walk.
- Preventing falls can prevent broken hips and help you stay independent.
- Let’s look at some factors that may make you likely to fall, and talk about what you could do about one or two of them.
- I’m going to refer you to a specialist who can help you improve your vision, balance, and optimize your medications.

**Key Facts About Falls:**

- One in four older adults (age 65+) falls every year.
- Many patients who have fallen do not talk about it.

**Fall Screening Questions:**

- Have you fallen in the past year?
- Do you feel unsteady when standing or walking?
- Do you worry about falling?

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/steadi

Preventing Falls in Older Patients

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1. Be proactive:
   • Ask all patients age 65+ to assess their fall risk.

2. Identify modifiable fall risk factors:
   • Vestibular disorder/poor balance
   • Vitamin D insufficiency
   • Medications linked to falls
   • Postural hypotension
   • Vision impairment
   • Foot or ankle disorder
   • Home hazards

3. Intervene using effective clinical strategies:
   • Strength and balance program (e.g., physical therapy, Tai Chi)
   • Vitamin D supplementation
   • Medication management
   • Corrective eyewear
   • Cataract surgery
   • Orthotics and exercise
   • Home modification led by an occupational therapist