CATCH RURAL Falls

Coordinated Action Toward Community Health: RedUce Risk And Limit Falls

Assessment and Intervention for Gait, Strength, and Balance Impairments

University of Nebraska Medical Center

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Introductions and Contact Information

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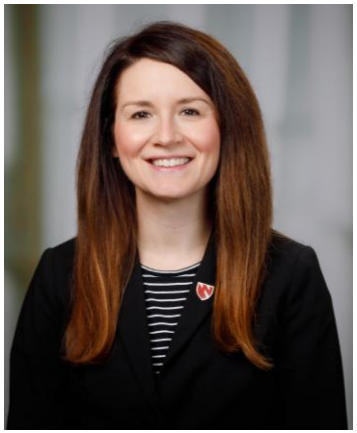


Educational Objectives

- Conduct gait, strength, and balance tests as part of a thorough assessment of fall risk
- Identify appropriate interventions when impairments in gait, strength, and balance are identified as risk factors

Steps for Fall Risk Management Recommended by the Centers for Disease Control Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries (STEADI) Initiative

Fall Risk Screening

- The identification of patients at increased risk of falling to determine if additional in-depth assessment of risk factors is needed

Fall Risk Assessment

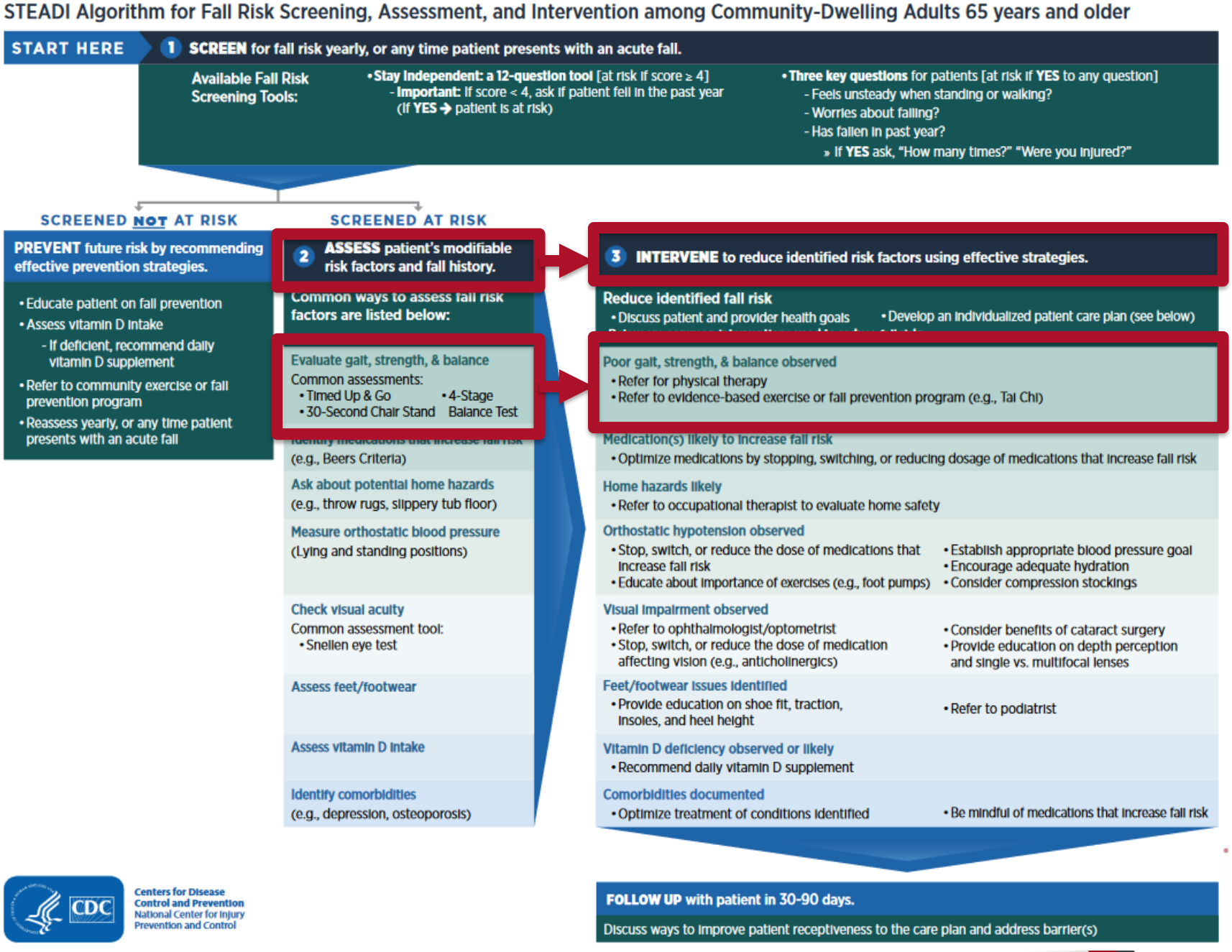
- The identification of specific risk factors to guide intervention
- *In other words, why is your patient at risk for falling?*

Fall Risk Intervention

- Addressing modifiable risk factors through medical management or referral to other health care professionals or resources

Centers for Disease Control Algorithm for Fall Risk Screening, Assessment, and Intervention

STEADI Algorithm



Assessment of Gait, Strength, and Balance

Administer one or more of the following standardized assessments:

Assessment of Gait, Strength, and Balance – Practical Tips

Promote safety

- Stand next to your patient during assessment
- Consider use of a gait belt
- If a patient is known to have a weaker side, guard them on that side
- Don't use a chair with wheels for the TUG and 30-sec chair stand test
- Place chair for the TUG and 30-sec chair stand test up against a wall

Make it easy and routine

- Set up a standard place in your clinic to conduct these assessments
- Use the same chair each time (seat height of 17" recommended)
- Keep equipment in the same place so it is easily found when needed
- If conducting standardized assessments isn't feasible, look for other clues, such as:
  - Using arms to rise from a chair
  - Touching walls or furniture while walking,
  - Deviation in walking path,
  - Lateral trunk sway while walking
  - Shuffling gait

Develop a workflow

- Determine who will conduct these tests in your clinic and how the results will be documented and communicated to others

Initiate Intervention When Indicated

If fail

- Refer to PT for further evaluation
  - **Individualized** exercise program, recommendations and training for activity modification, use of assistive devices

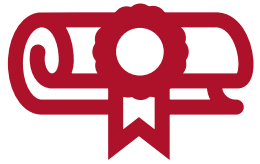
OR

- Consider referral to evidence-based community exercise/fall prevention program (if available)
  - **Generalized/group** exercise program and education

If pass

- Still consider referral to evidence-based community exercise/fall prevention program (if available)
  - **Generalized/group** exercise program and education

Physical Therapy Referral



- Some PTs have specialized training or board certification relevant to fall risk reduction. Examples:

American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties	American Physical Therapy Association
• Board-Certified Geriatric Clinical Specialist • Board-Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist	• Certified Exercise Expert for Aging Adults • Balance and Fall Prevention Credential

- That said, many PTs are still quite skilled and knowledgeable in addressing fall risk for older adults, even without extra training/certification!

Community-Based Exercise and Fall Prevention Programs

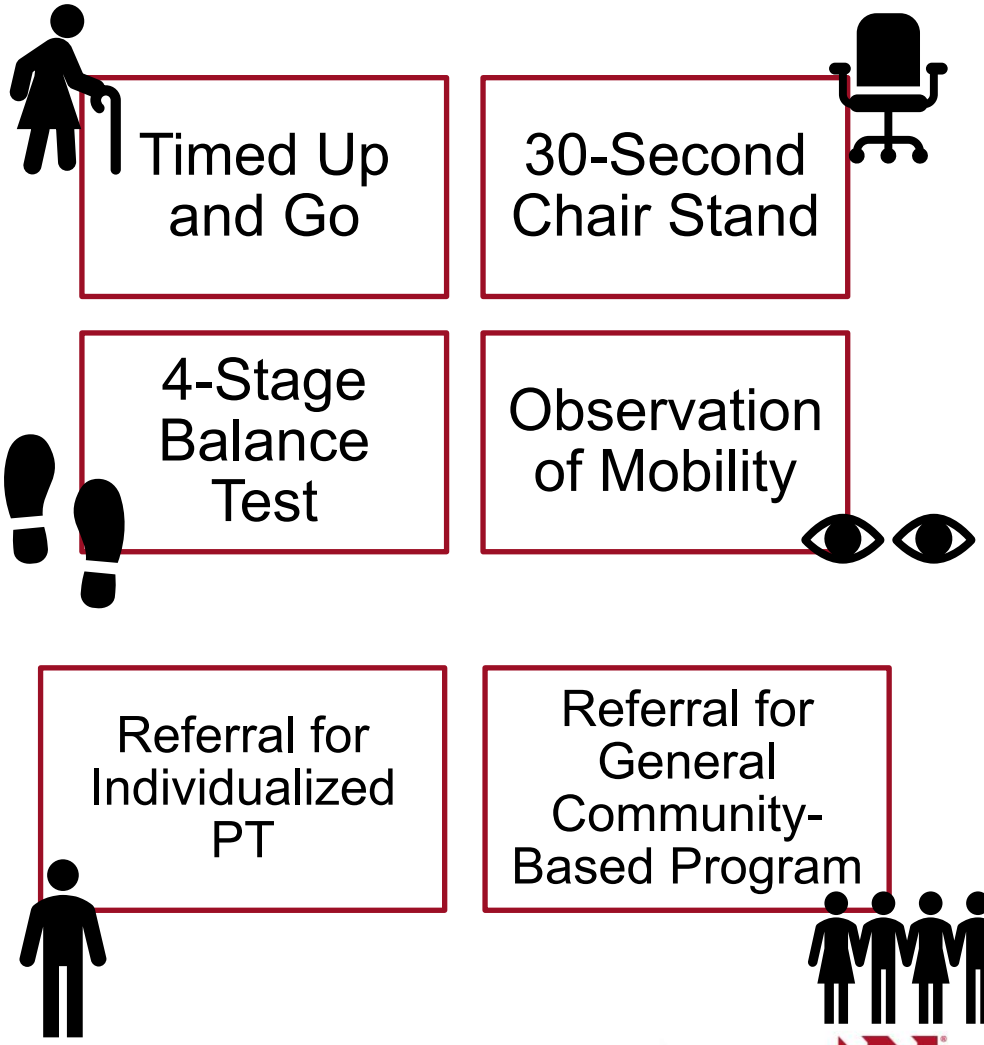
(Examples listed below include an exercise component. Many also include education on other fall risk reduction topics.)

Examples:

Summary: Review of Objectives

Conduct gait, strength, and balance tests as part of a thorough assessment of fall risk

Identify appropriate interventions when impairments in gait, strength, and balance are identified as risk factors



References and Resources

- Center for Disease Control (CDC) Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries (STEADI) Home Page
- CDC STEADI Algorithm for Fall Risk Screening, Assessment, and Intervention
- CDC STEADI Coordinated Care Plan to Prevent Older Adult Falls
- Timed Up and Go (TUG) Test Instructions Video
- 30-Second Chair Stand Test Instructions Video
- 4-Stage Balance Test Instructions Video
- National Council on Aging List of Evidence-Based Fall Prevention Programs
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Local Health Departments (Nebraska Health Departments as an example)

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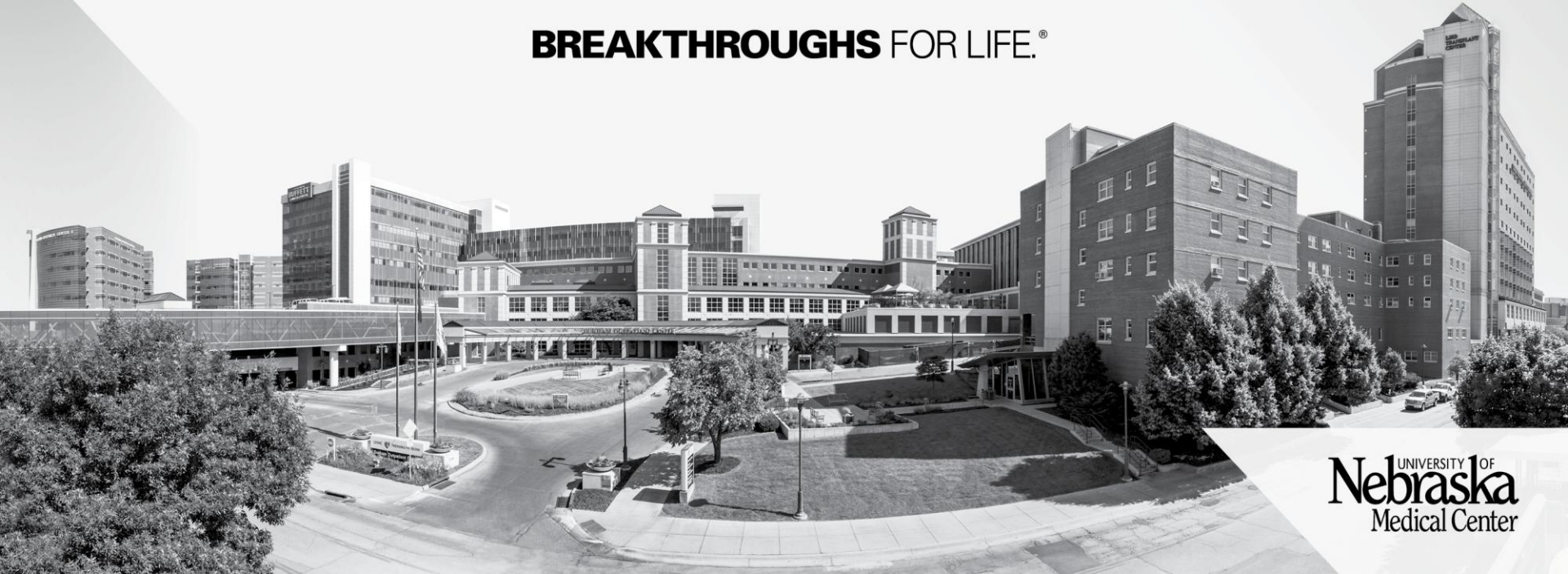

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