

Assessment of Falls in Seniors Specific Recommendations for Primary Care

Screening

- Ask once a year about falls
- If single fall, do Timed Up & Go
- If no problem, no further assessment
- If difficulty or unsteadiness – requires comprehensive evaluation



After One or More Falls / Gait or Balance Abnormalities

Comprehensive falls evaluation including:

- History of fall
- Medication review
- Medical problems
- Mobility levels
- Vision
- Gait and balance
- Lower extremity joint function
- Neurological function:
 - Mental status
 - Muscle strength
 - Lower extremity peripheral nerves
 - Proprioception
 - Reflexes
 - Tests of cortical, extrapyramidal & cerebellar function
- Cardiovascular status:
 - Heart rate and rhythm
 - Postural pulse and BP
- If appropriate, HR and BP responses to carotid sinus stimulation



There is no such thing as a trivial fall – the next one might be devastating.

Laird, R.D. and Robinson, B.E. (Eds) (2006). Falls in older adults: Evaluation and management in primary practice (3rd Ed). In Tool Kit 4: *The Practicing Physician Education Project Tools for the Evaluation and Management of Geriatric Patients in Primary Practice*. Supported by the Merck Institute of Aging and Health. Retrieved, July 4, 2008, from <http://www.gericareonline.net/tools/eng/falls/index.html>.