

A light blue silhouette of a person falling backwards with arms and legs outstretched, centered in the background of the slide.

# Falling Down Falls Assessment and Fractures

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# Preventive Care

- \* Dr. Holley recently outlined preventive care of the patient with chronic kidney disease (CKD) on dialysis.
- \* Care aspects included:
  - \* Immunization
  - \* Cancer Screening
  - \* Hearing and Vision
  - \* Dental Health
  - \* Falls Assessment and Fractures
  - \* Frailty
  - \* Healthcare Counseling
  - \* Screening for Cognitive Impairment and Depression
  - \* Advance Care Planning

# Preventive Care: Falls

- \* Did you notice “falls assessment and fractures” among the many preventive topics discussed?
- \* Why do we have to worry about our patients falling?

# Fracture Facts

- \* 10% – 40% of patients on dialysis experience a fracture
- \* 50% of patients on dialysis over the age of 50 years experience a fracture
- \* Hip fractures increase hospitalizations
- \* Hip fractures increase mortality

# Falls Foreshadow Fractures

- \* Older patients on dialysis average 1.6 falls per patient year - compared with 0.6 – 0.8 falls for older adults not on dialysis
- \* Patients with a history of falls are at risk for fractures.

# Risk Factors for Falls

- \* Age
- \* Comorbid conditions
- \* Mean pre-dialysis systolic blood pressure
- \* History of falls
- \* Hypotension, arrhythmias, post dialysis fatigue/wash-out



# What do we need to do?

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No time! No resources! No idea how to begin?



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Keep it simple!  
Here is what we can do today!



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# Ask the Patient!

Ask the patient a simple question:

“Have you fallen here, at home or anywhere since your last dialysis treatment”?

[Remember, one or more falls puts the patient at risk for a fracture]

Document the patient’s response including where, when, how, and any injury



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# Assess Patient's Risk for Falls

1. As patients enter the dialysis unit for treatment, do a quick visual assessment. Observe:

- Patient's gait
- Use of a cane or walker
- Ability to transition:
  - From standing to sitting
  - From seated to standing

Document observations

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# Assess Patient's Risk for Falls

2. As patients complete their treatment and prepare to leave the dialysis unit:

- Measure blood pressure
- Assess patient stability upon standing
- Observe patient's gait

Document B/P and observations

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## Morse Fall Scale

Fall Risk is based upon Fall Risk Factors and it is more than a Total Score. Determine Fall Risk Factors and Target Interventions to Reduce Risks.

Complete on admission, at change of condition, transfer to new unit, and after a fall.

Variables		Score	
History of Falling	no	0	_____
	yes	25	
Secondary Diagnosis	no	0	_____
	yes	15	
Ambulatory Aid	None/bed rest /nurse assist	0	_____
	Crutches/cane/walker	15	
	Furniture	30	
IV or IV access	no	0	_____
	yes	20	
Gait	Normal/bed rest/wheelchair	0	_____
	Weak	10	
	Impaired	20	
Mental status	Knows own limits	0	_____
	Overestimates or forgets limits	15	
Total			_____

Other assessment instruments are available!

## 4. Morse Fall Score

- History of falling
- Ambulatory aid
- Gait
- Mental status

<http://www.patientsafety.gov/CogAids/FallPrevention/index.html#page-4>

# Teach the Patient!

Prevention is the key:

- \* Increase patient knowledge about risk for falls
- \* Discuss strength, balance, and mobility
- \* Reinforce post dialysis stability strategies
- \* Review proper nutrition
- \* Set reasonable expectations



# Patient Education Materials Available!

FREE patient education materials are available on multiple websites!

## **STAIRS AND STEPS:** Look at the stairs you use both inside and outside your home.

**Q: Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the stairs?**

- Pick up things on the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs.

**Q: Are some steps broken or uneven?**

- Fix loose or uneven steps.

**Q: Are you missing a light over the stairway?**

- Have an electrician put in an overhead light at the top and bottom of the stairs.

**Q: Do you have only one light switch for your stairs (only at the top or at the bottom of the stairs)?**

- Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.

**Q: Has the stairway light bulb burned out?**

- Have a friend or family member change the light bulb.

**Q: Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?**

- Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.

**Q: Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on only one side of the stairs?**

- Fix loose handrails or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs.



Photo courtesy of Julie Potts

# Helpful Websites

Older Adult Falls publications

<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/pubs.html>

Ways to Prevent Falls and Fractures

[http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health\\_Info/Bone/Osteoporosis/Fracture/prevent\\_falls\\_ff.asp](http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Bone/Osteoporosis/Fracture/prevent_falls_ff.asp)



# Teach the Staff!

Teach and coach staff how to assess and report findings:

1. Patient or caregiver report of fall
2. Change in gait
3. Change in stability post dialysis

# Fall Prevention is Essential

- \* Start with a simple question,  
“Have you fallen”?
- \* Assess and identify patients at risk for falls
- \* Report findings for appropriate intervention:
  - Further medical management
  - Balance and strength training
  - Environmental modifications

# Fall Prevention is Essential

- \* Educate patients how to prevent and self-manage
- \* Teach staff what to observe, report and document

# Additional Resources

- \* <http://www.stopfalls.org/index.shtml>
- \* [http://www.nursingcenter.com/prodev/ce\\_article.asp?tid=751712](http://www.nursingcenter.com/prodev/ce_article.asp?tid=751712)
- \* <http://www.ihi.org/explore/Falls/Pages/default.aspx>
- \* <http://www.ahrq.gov/research/ltc/fallspix/fallspixmanual.htm>
- \* <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/Falls/steady/index.html>