

Falls facts for allied health professionals

Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People:
Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Community Care 2009

Allied health professionals have a central role in preventing falls and harm from falls in older people who live in the community. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has produced national guidelines to inform clinical practice and assist health professionals working in the community to develop and implement practices to prevent falls and injuries from falls.

What can you do to help?

- Assess older people for their risk of falling, and implement strategies to reduce the rate of falls.
- Encourage the older person to participate in exercise programs (particularly programs that involve balance training).
- Arrange a home safety assessment and modification by an experienced occupational therapist to reduce the rate of falls for older people who live in the community and who have a high risk of falling.
- Use multiple interventions (including exercise and home safety interventions) to reduce the rate of falls.

Recommendations from the guidelines

Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Community Care 2009 recommends falls prevention interventions based on the latest evidence and practice.

Single interventions that are effective in reducing falls include:

- exercise (particularly exercise programs that include balance training)
- vitamin D with calcium supplementation
- home safety interventions.

Multiple interventions tested in Australia that are effective in reducing the *rate* of falls include the following components:

- exercise
- participant education
- home safety.

Multiple interventions with combinations of components that are all effective in reducing the *risk* of falling include:

- exercise and home safety
- exercise and vision assessment
- exercise, vision assessment and home safety.

Multiple interventions as a population-based approach to preventing injuries caused by falls are effective and can form the basis of public health practice.

This fact sheet has been adapted from *Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Community Care 2009*, developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

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1. *Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Community Care 2009.*



The following resources have been developed to assist implementation of the Falls Guidelines:

2. *Guidebook for Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People: Australian Community Care 2009.*
A Short Version of Preventing Falls and Harm From Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Community Care 2009.



3. *Fact sheets:*

- Falls facts for doctors
- Falls facts for nurses
- Falls facts for allied health professionals.



All publications are available from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care website www.safetyandquality.gov.au

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