

# Falls facts for doctors

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

Doctors have an important role to play in preventing falls and harm from falls in older people who live in the community. You are also well placed to prevent falls through a team approach to planning, implementing and evaluating an individualised falls prevention plan.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has produced national falls prevention guidelines for community care, which are designed to inform clinical practice. They will assist health professionals providing community care to develop and implement practices to prevent falls and injuries from falls.

## What can you do to help?

- Routinely ask older people whether they have fallen recently.
- Assess falls risk and refer or intervene, based on initial assessment.

## 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:

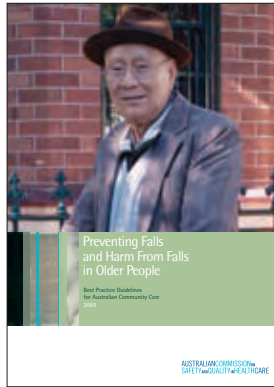
- Review medications, especially high-risk medications, such as sedatives, antidepressants, antipsychotics and centrally acting pain relief.
- Assess and manage bone health in older people who have, or who are at risk of, low-trauma fractures. This includes the use of vitamin D and calcium, as well as formal treatments for osteoporosis.
- Check lying and standing blood pressure in older people at risk of falls.
- Encourage (or refer) older people to exercise to prevent falls (especially balance training).
- Refer older people with severe visual impairment to an occupational therapist for a home safety assessment.
- Ensure that high-risk fallers receive a multidisciplinary assessment with tailored interventions.

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](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au)

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care  
Level 7, 1 Oxford Street  
Darlinghurst NSW 2010  
Tel: (02) 9263 3633  
Email: [mail@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:mail@safetyandquality.gov.au)