

# CATCH YOUR PATIENTS BEFORE THEY FALL

**Every eleven seconds, an older adult is treated in an emergency department due to an accidental fall. Additionally, fall death rates in the U.S. increased by 30% between 2007- 2016.**

Below is a coordinated approach outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for providers, including doctors of chiropractic (DC) like yourself, to effectively implement a Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries (STEADI)-based clinical fall prevention program.

## 1 Screen Your Patients

Each year, one in four individuals aged 65 and older fall, yet less than 50% of these individuals report it to their doctor.

For this reason, any patient 65 years or older should be screened annually for fall risk. To screen your patient, you can regularly inquire about previous falls or have patients fill out a fall risk self-assessment.

To view the CDC's questionnaire, visit: [www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/STEADI-Brochure-StayIndependent-508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/STEADI-Brochure-StayIndependent-508.pdf)

## 2 Conduct Clinical Assessments

To fully assess a patient's risk of fall, adequate assessments may include:

- Conduct gait, strength and balance tests
- Identify any medications taken that may increase fall risk
- Ask about home environment and any potential home hazards
- Measure orthostatic blood pressure
- Assess visual acuity
- Assess feet and footwear
- Assess vitamin D intake
- Identify comorbidities that increase fall risk (ie: cognitive problems, Parkinson's disease, cardiac issues, depression, incontinence)

## 3 Intervene

Once you have screened and assessed your patient's risk of fall, the next step is to intervene and put a care plan in place.

Work with your patient to determine the best next steps to help minimize fall risk. As a DC, you may recommend strength and balance exercises to help prevent falls at home, or offer tips on how to improve home safety.

For full details on how to implement the CDC's STEADI-based clinical fall prevention program, please visit: [www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/Steady-Coordinated-Care-Final-4\\_24\\_19.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/Steady-Coordinated-Care-Final-4_24_19.pdf) (pages 37-49)