

# Prevent Older Adult Falls During and After Hospital Stays

## A CDC guide explains how to develop an inpatient fall prevention program

The odds of falling are higher in the month after a person leaves the hospital. These falls can have devastating consequences, especially for older adults (age 65+).

In response to this growing problem, the Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries (STEADI) initiative at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released **CDC STEADI: Best Practices for Developing an Inpatient Program to Prevent Older Adult Falls after Discharge**. The guide offers successful strategies that inpatient teams can adapt to integrate a fall prevention program into their existing inpatient workflow and clinical practice.

## FALLS ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF INJURY AND INJURY-RELATED DEATH IN OLDER ADULTS

Older adults often experience decreased mobility while confined to their rooms or beds during a hospital stay. This can increase the risk of functional decline, poor functional outcomes after discharge, and hospital readmissions. However, hospitals can help prevent falls by incorporating fall prevention best practices into their inpatient workflow and clinical practice.

## Success Story



The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) adapted CDC's STEADI initiative by incorporating three core steps:

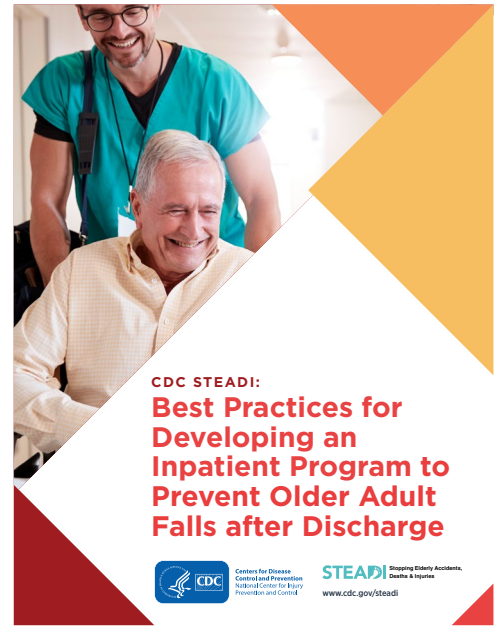
- 1 To **screen** for fall risk, they expanded inpatient fall screening to include STEADI's three key questions upon admission.
- 2 To **assess** for modifiable risk factors, they asked physical therapists to test for balance and mobility during hospital stays.
- 3 To **intervene** using effective clinical strategies, they referred to physical therapy for post-discharge care.

*"Once we added fall risk screening and assessment to the UCSF electronic health record system, we nearly doubled our falls screening rates at admission, and our physical therapy referrals rose to 89%."*

—Dr. Andrew Auerbach, Division of Hospital Medicine, UCSF



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control



# Build Your Inpatient Fall Prevention Program

**CDC's new best practices guide gives inpatient teams a framework for promoting safe mobility and managing older patients' fall risk.** The guide includes 10 practical steps informed by research findings and provider experiences to:

- Decrease patient falls during and after hospital stays
- Promote better collaboration with external providers for post-discharge care
- Improve hospital processes and records
- Identify and manage medications that increase patient fall risk

**Other program benefits include:**

- Higher quality of care and better health outcomes
- Compliance with hospital readmission reduction programs

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## LET'S GET STARTED

CDC's STEADI initiative provides tools based on an established clinical guideline to screen older adults for fall risk, assess fall risk factors, and intervene to reduce fall risk.