



Falls: From the Ground Up

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Objectives



**Identify areas for
potential falls**



**Strategies to
address fall risks**

Definition

Fall: To descend by the force of gravity from a higher to a lower place



Fall Statistics

Falls are the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths worldwide.



Each year an estimated 684,000 individuals die from falls globally, of which over 80% are in low and middle-income countries.



Adults older than 60 years of age suffer the greatest number of fatal falls. Falls are the leading cause of injury for adults ages 65 years and older.



37.3 million falls that are severe enough to require medical attention occur each year.

Resource: World Health Organization 2021; CDC 2024

Where Can Falls Occur?

1

Environment

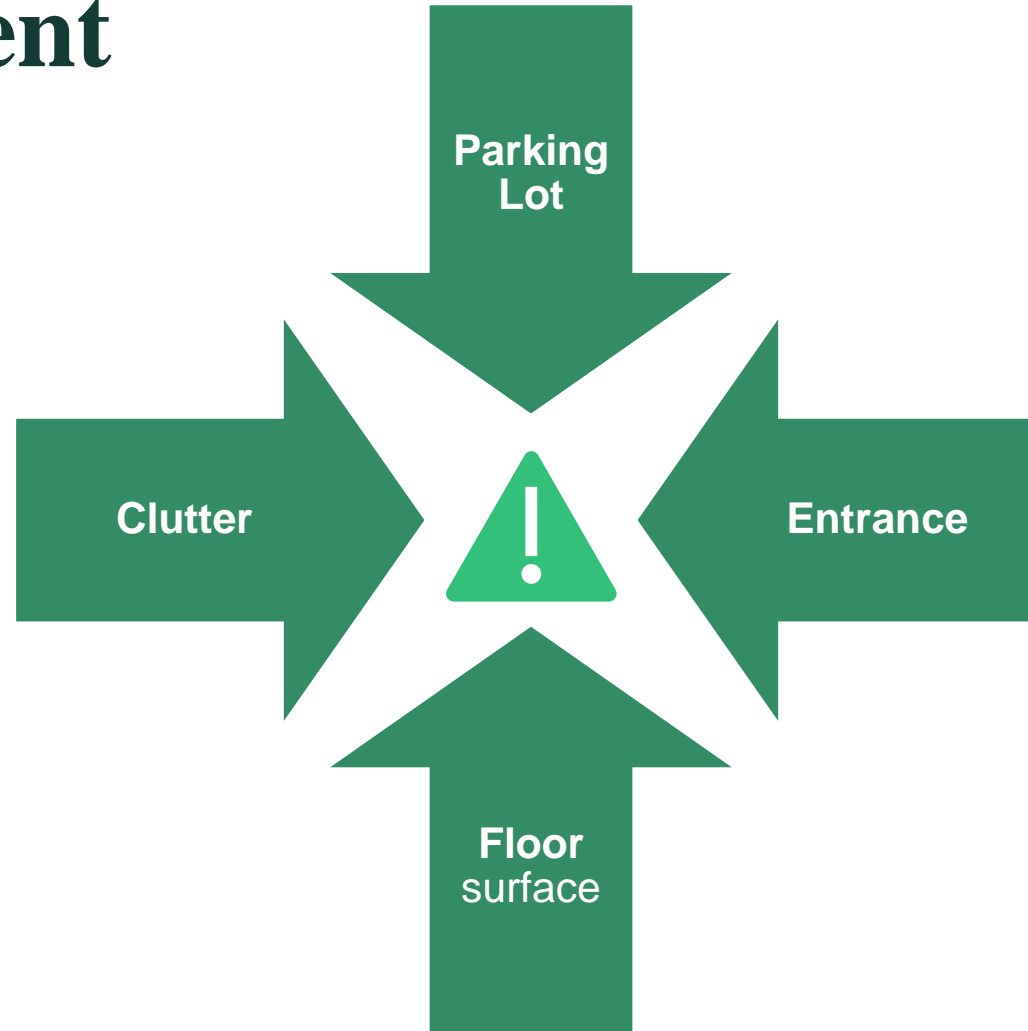
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Ambulatory Area

3

Inpatient

Environment



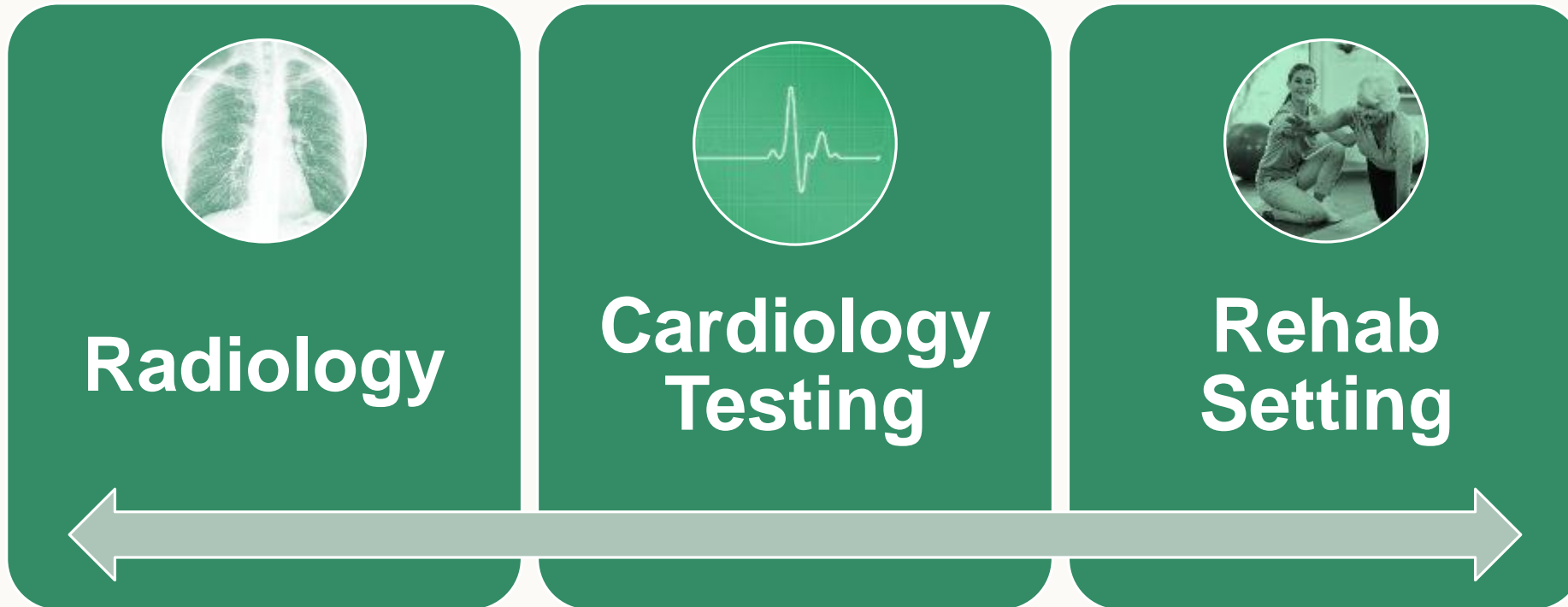
Environment Risk Mitigation Strategies

- ✓ Weekly environmental rounds
- ✓ Consistent use of wet floor signs
- ✓ Non-slip mats at entrances
- ✓ Declutter

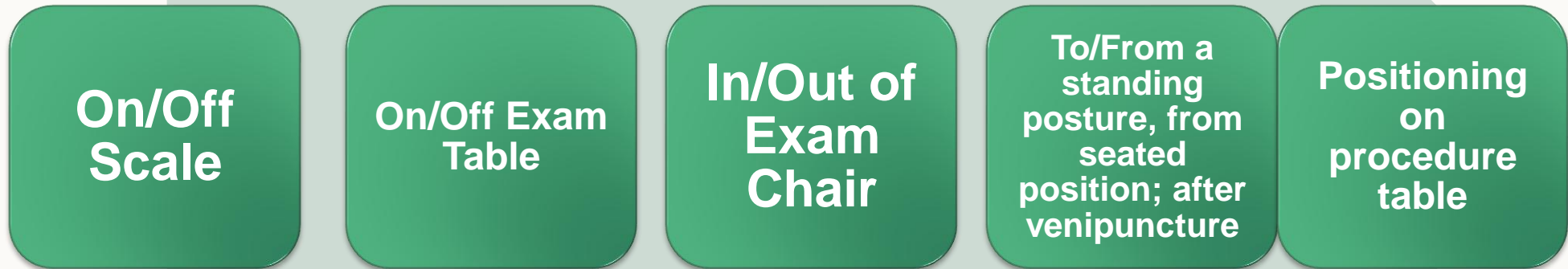




Ambulatory Fall Risk Areas



Ambulatory Falls Risks





Reasons for Patient Falls

- Lengthy in-office procedures
- Mobility issues
- Weakness/dizziness
- Improper use of exercise equipment

Ambulatory Risk Mitigation Strategies

Assess Patient and Fall education

Assistance with transfers

Assistance with dressing

Toileting assistance and supervision



Ambulatory Fall

- 75 yo male is at radiology facility for x-rays of left leg
- Patient changes into scrub pants and walks down hallway with no assistance
- Patient trips on bottom of scrub pants, falls, and breaks left arm



Ambulatory Fall Tips



**Assess patients who may
be identified as high fall
risks**

**Staff training on fall
prevention, investigation,
and incident reporting**

Post Fall Management Tips





Inpatient Falls

Patient falls resulting in injury are consistently among the most frequently reviewed Sentinel Events by The Joint Commission.

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Inpatient Fall Factors

**Unfamiliar
environment**

Lines

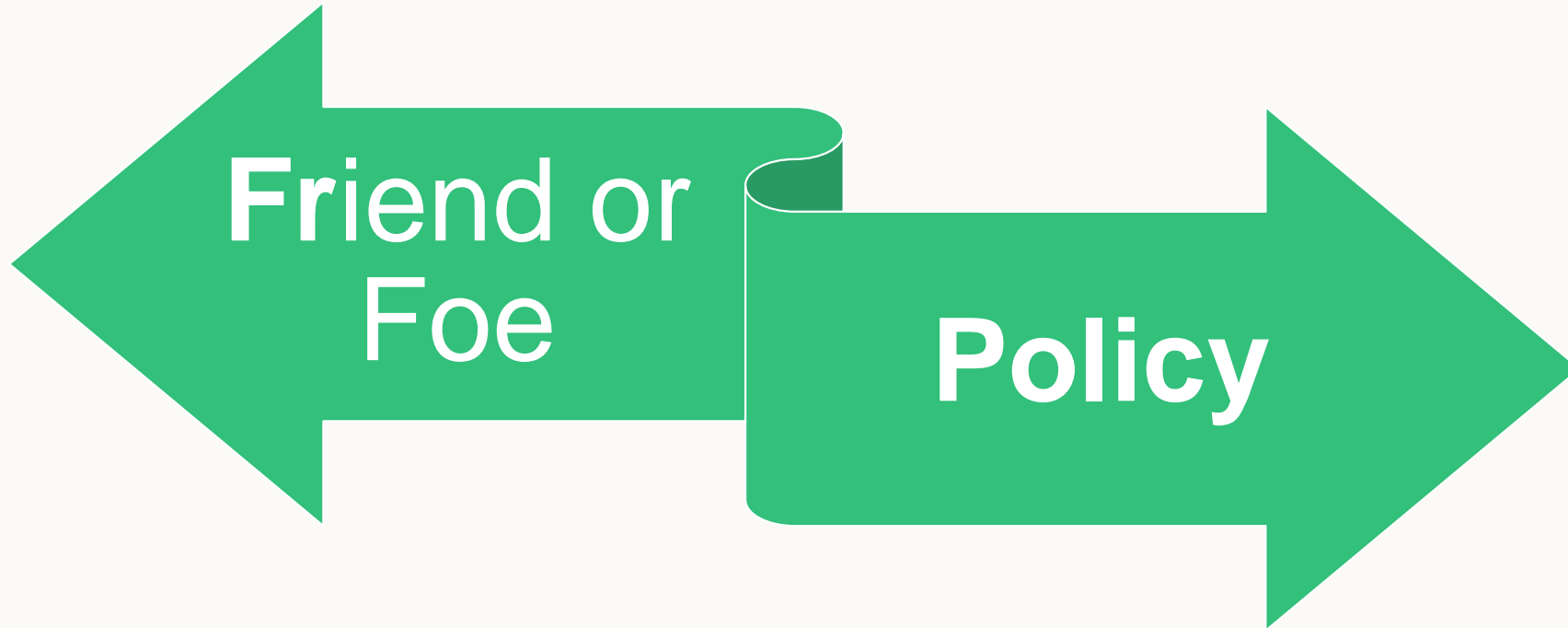
**Polypharmacy
use**

Immobility

Age

**Change in
status**

Bed Alarms



Inpatient Risk Mitigation Strategies

Assess



Re-assess

Inpatient Risk Mitigation Strategies

Educate



Re-educate

Inpatient Risk Mitigation Strategies: Documentation

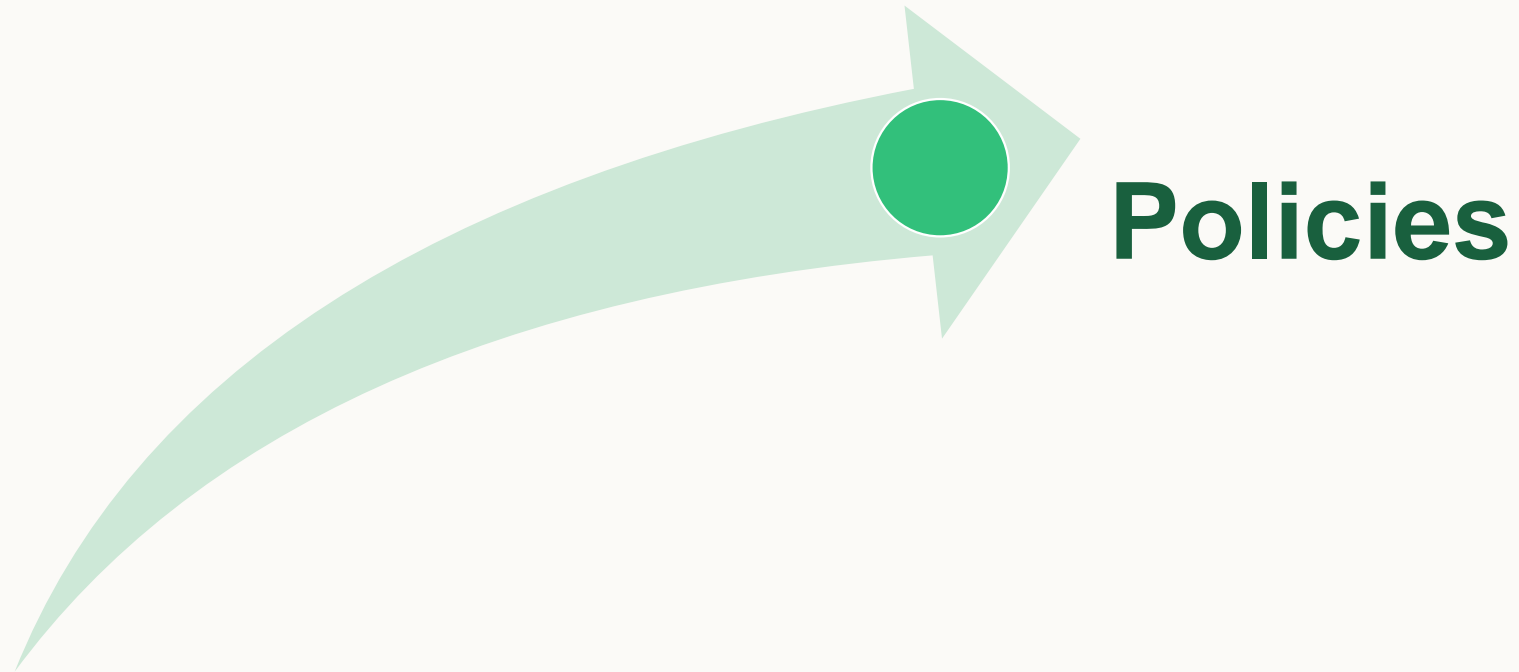


“Verba volant, scripta manent”

(spoken words fly away, written words remain)

~Caius Titus

Inpatient Risk Mitigation Strategies: Policies



Post Fall Management

Patient evaluation and treatment as needed

Contact provider and family

Huddle with appropriate staff in supportive environment

Discuss whether appropriate interventions were in place
Considerations on why the fall occurred

Prevention strategies

Environmental Fall (Copic Closed Claims)

- Parking Lot
 - Ice
 - Poor Lighting
 - Uneven Surfaces
- Automatic Doors
- Elevator
- Water on floors



Ambulatory Fall (Copic Closed Claims)

- **Post Injection Fall**
- **Fall off procedure table**
- **Fall from wheelchair**
- **Fall in PT area**
- **Fall off exam table**
- **Fall off scale**



Inpatient Fall (Copic Closed Claims)

- **Inadequate fall risk assessment**
- **Failure to timely respond to patient calls**
- **Fall off bedside commode**
- **Failure to appropriately use bed alarm**



Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention STEADI Toolkit:
<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/Falls/steady/index.html>
- Effects of an Intervention to Increase Bed Alarm Use to Prevent Falls in Hospitalized Patients
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3549269/pdf/nihms432791.pdf
- Institute for Johns Hopkins Nursing Models and Tools:
https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/institute_nursing/models-tools.html
- Joint Commission:
[https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/resources/patient-safety-topics/sentinel-event/03162023_sentinel-event_annual-review_final-\(002\).pdf](https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/resources/patient-safety-topics/sentinel-event/03162023_sentinel-event_annual-review_final-(002).pdf)

Questions?

Thank you!

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