

# Pathway to rehabilitative care for frail older adults in the community presenting to Emergency Department post-fall and not requiring acute hospitalization

Emergency Department

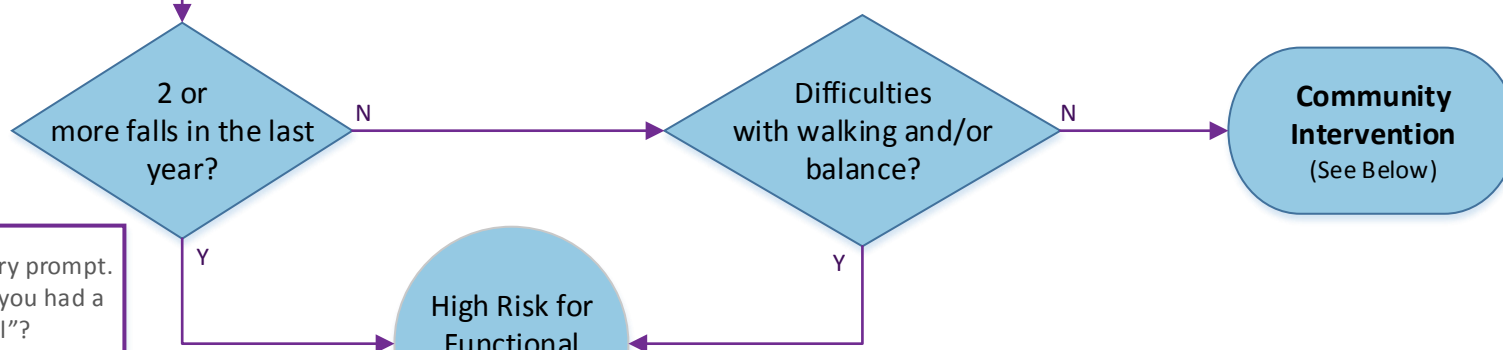
Older Adult 65+ years



Older adult reports fall(s) or presents immediately following a fall

Definition: A fall is defined as an event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level.  
World Health Organization

Older adults who experience a fall are likely to have multiple conditions and complex health needs. Preventing functional decline and further falls among high risk older adults requires an integrated, coordinated approach to care.



**Immediately following a fall:**

- Assess severity of injury
- Rule out acute medical conditions
- Injuries may be occult or present atypically

Suggest secondary prompt. Example: Have you had a "Near Fall"?

Preliminary Evaluation

**Multifactorial Evaluation**

- Determine risk factors for secondary fall
- Assess level of frailty: eg. Clinical Frailty Scale (CFS)\*
- Use interdisciplinary team approach. Refer to GEM Nurse, PT, OT, SW, RD as appropriate

**Multiple fall risk factors, including:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Intake	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobility/Balance
<input type="checkbox"/> Cognition	<input type="checkbox"/> Mood
<input type="checkbox"/> Feet/Foot Wear	<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition & Hydration
<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> Orthostatic Hypotension
<input type="checkbox"/> Home Hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> Polypharmacy
<input type="checkbox"/> Inactivity/sedentary	<input type="checkbox"/> Vestibular Conditions
<input type="checkbox"/> Incontinence	<input type="checkbox"/> Vision
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical History	

**~All domains are assessed together to inform a comprehensive plan of care**

Not frail  
eg. CFS 1-3  
Few fall risk factors  
Not medically complex

Mild to moderate frailty, eg. CFS 4-6  
Multiple fall risk factors  
Reasonably mobile  
May be medically/ psychosocially complex

Mild to moderate frailty, eg. CFS 4-6  
Multiple fall risk factors and/or medically complex  
Requires nursing care and support over and above what can be provided in the local community setting, i.e., no other reasonable means of rehabilitative care

**Community Intervention**

**Outpatient Ambulatory/ In Home Care/ Specialized Geriatric Services**

**Explore Direct Access to Inpatient Rehabilitative Care**

Referrals for rehab services to address risk factors identified

**Redirect to Primary Care Practitioner**  
Consider referral to:  
Home & Community Care

**Publicly funded rehabilitative care service listing:**  
[www.rehabcareontario.ca](http://www.rehabcareontario.ca)

Consider privately funded rehabilitation options

Referrals for rehab services to address risk factors identified

**Redirect to Primary Care Practitioner**  
Consider referrals to:  
Home & Community Care  
Outpatient Ambulatory Rehabilitative Care Services  
Specialized Geriatric Services, if available

**Publicly funded rehabilitative care service listing:**  
[www.rehabcareontario.ca](http://www.rehabcareontario.ca)

Consider privately funded rehabilitation options

Explore direct referral to inpatient rehabilitative care services, where available (wait at home for admission, if safe to do so)

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Assessment and Intervention

\*1. Canadian Study on Health & Aging, Revised 2008.  
2. K. Rockwood et al. A global clinical measure of fitness and frailty in elderly people. CMAJ 2005;173:489-495.