

Seniors and You: Best Practices for Quality Geriatric Care

Many seniors experience problems with gait and mobility or urinary incontinence that greatly increase their fall risk. Since these can affect physical health and quality of life, you will want to address these issues with your patients. Here are some things you can do.

COMMON GERIATRIC CONDITIONS

GAIT AND MOBILITY

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| Signs of balance problems | <p>Watch your patients as they enter the clinic or walk to the exam room for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shuffling • Slow steps • Unsteady or missed steps or tripping • Use of cane or walker |
| What you can do | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the patient if they have had any falls recently. • Ask if they have had any trouble walking (with or without their assistive devices). • Share observations with the doctor to discuss fall risk and treatment options. |

URINARY INCONTINENCE

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| Ask your patient | <p>Urinary incontinence poses unique health concerns, including depression and social isolation. In the privacy of an exam room, ask your patient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have they had any bladder leaks recently? • Have they had difficulty getting to the bathroom on time? • Have they been reluctant to leave their homes for fear of an accident? • Have they had disrupted sleep from frequent urination at night? |
| What you can do | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the patient's responses with the doctor to discuss remedies and treatments that can improve the patient's situation. |

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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| Ask your patient | <p>Regular exercise can improve strength and balance. Ask your patient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they exercise? If so, how often and what type of exercises? • Do they have any concerns about exercise? • What are physical activities they enjoy doing (like gardening, housework, or walking)? |
| Local resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many community centers and senior centers offer exercise classes to the public. • The National Institute on Aging's Go4Life website provides seniors with tips, videos, and motivational tools (https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/). • Patients with SilverSneakers membership can find senior-friendly gyms by calling (866) 584-7389 (TTY: 711) or visiting www.silversneakers.com. |