

Appendix E: List of Risk Factors

Tables 10, 11 and 12 outline falls risk factors, health conditions associated with increased risk for falls, and factors associated with an increased risk for fall injuries. This is not an exhaustive list. The key findings from the evidence are included. Categories for risk factors vary in the literature and some risk factors may fall under more than one category. Additional risk factors and conditions were added based on the expert panel; these are indicated by an asterisk (*) symbol.

Table 10: Falls Risk Factors

FALLS RISK FACTOR GROUP	RISK FACTORS
Behavioural or psychological (activity-related)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hurrying; not paying attention* ■ Taking risks (e.g., climbing on a chair) ■ Physical inactivity ■ Fear of falling ■ Dual tasking (performing two tasks simultaneously) ■ Incorrect use of assistive devices ■ Wearing unsupportive footwear ■ Substance use (i.e., drugs and alcohol)*
Biological (sometimes called intrinsic)	<p>Non-modifiable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advanced age and/or associated frailty ■ Previous falls ■ Some diseases (e.g., macular degeneration, glaucoma, dementia)* <p>Modifiable (or amenable to interventions to reduce risk):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Impaired balance, gait, or mobility, including disability, amputation, muscle weakness (especially in legs), slowed reflexes (reactive power) ■ Cognitive impairments: confusion or altered mental status, delirium ■ Impaired vision ■ Incontinence ■ Malnutrition and related sarcopenia (loss of muscle mass and strength) ■ Symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Vertigo, dizziness □ Sleep disturbance □ Postural hypotension

FALLS RISK FACTOR GROUP	RISK FACTORS
Environmental or situational (sometimes called extrinsic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Polypharmacy ■ Use of certain medications (e.g., anticonvulsants, tranquilizers, antihypertensives, opioids/narcotics, anti-depressants) ■ Home hazards (e.g., loose carpets, pets, stairs) ■ Prolonged hospital stay ■ Need for transfer assistance ■ Use of restraints* ■ Side rails*
Socio-economic*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unable to afford supportive footwear* ■ Unable to afford certain medications, nutritious foods* ■ No social supports; isolated* ■ Unable to read (e.g., instructions on medicine bottles)*

Sources: Ambrose et al., 2015; Ambrose et al., 2013; Boelens et al., 2013; Callis, 2016; Deandrea et al., 2013; Flaherty & Josephson, 2013; Gleeson et al., 2014; NICE, 2013; Papaioannou et al., 2015; Rice et al., 2015; Vieira et al., 2011; Wallis & Campbell, 2011; Zhao & Kim, 2015.

* Provided by the expert panel.

Note: Findings regarding gender as a risk factor for falls (i.e., whether being male or female increased the risk for falls) was inconsistent in the literature (Ambrose et al., 2015; Ambrose et al., 2013; Callis, 2016; Deandrea et al., 2013).

