Opportunistic Screening for older people (age > 65) at medical encounters at least once every 12 months

Any one or more of the following?
1. Had ≥ 2 falls in past 12 months?
2. Presented with acute fall?
3. Difficulty with walking or balance?

Yes → Loss of consciousness?

No → Had one fall in past 12 months?

Yes → Timed Up and Go Test

>14 seconds OR Abnormal / unsteady gait?

Yes → Consider multidisciplinary / multifactorial interventions
1. Adjust medications
2. Exercise program
3. Treat visual impairment and medical conditions
4. Vitamin D supplement
5. Modify home environment, advice on footwear and use of walking aids if needed

No → Health advice on fall prevention and reassess periodically

Yes → Required detailed cardiovascular and neurological assessment

Assessment:
1. Circumstances of fall
2. Environment
3. Medical / drug history
4. Physical assessment e.g. vital signs, gait and balance, visual acuity, cardiovascular, neurological, lower limb power, feet and footwear

Yes → Consider referral to specialist for further management

No → No

Extracted from the Module on Falls in Elderly, Hong Kong Reference Framework for Preventive Care for Older Adults in Primary Care Settings available at www.pco.gov.hk
Timed Up and Go Test

Patient sits in an arm chair, with back resting on the back of the chair
Mark on the floor 3 metres away from the chair

Ask the patient to
1. Rise from the chair and walk at regular pace for 3 metres to the mark on the floor
2. Turn around and walk back to the chair
3. Sit down in the chair

(Customary walking aid is allowed but not be assisted by another person.)

Interpretation:
A score of > 14 seconds* has been shown to indicate high risk of falls

*Cut off values for fall risk may vary in different studies. The cut off value of 14 seconds is conventionally adopted to discriminate fallers and non-fallers in healthy, highly functional older people. Full version of the Module on Falls in Elderly is available at http://www.pco.gov.hk/engrish/resource/files/Module_on_Falls_in_elderly.pdf