

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Clinical Tip: A Simple Strategy Can Head Off Falls and Related Injuries

All you need is this inexpensive device.

A caregiver may not always have the time to check on a frequent faller as often as she'd like. But if the nursing facility has a timer, the staff may be able to share that responsibility in manageable increments.

That tactic worked well for one facility in caring for a resident who was falling every 15 minutes for one week due to a urinary tract infection, reported its director of nursing, **Ann Donovan, RN**, in a presentation on quality improvement at the November 2009 American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging annual meeting. A caregiver would set the timer to go off in 15 minutes. During that time, she would check in on the resident to see if he needed help. When the timer went off, the caregiver handed it off to someone else who reset it and checked on the resident for another 15 minutes. Everyone from the CNAs to the charge nurses to Donovan herself took turns.

The "short-term intervention" helped until the resident's antibiotic "kicked in" and reduced his UTI-related symptoms and fall risk, Donovan reported.

Tip: Some facilities cross train their staff as CNAs so that activities staff, as an example, can assist a resident, noted quality improvement expert **Ruth Bish**, who copresented with Donovan.

Editor's note: For another fall prevention tip, see Clinical Research News on page 24.