

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

RISK MANAGEMENT: Evaluate Residents' Ability To Get Up And Go

This simple test can identify residents at increased risk of taking a tumble.

Taking the time to do the "Timed Get Up and Go" test for residents at risk for falls can pay off in spades.

To perform the test, ask the resident to sit in a chair that has arms, advised **Denise Wassenaar, RN, MS**, in a presentation at the recent **American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging** annual meeting in San Antonio.

Measure out 10 feet in front of the resident's chair. Ask the person to walk to you when you say go. The person stands up, walks to you, turns around and returns to the seat to sit down, instructed Wassenaar. Look for steadiness of gait and gait speed--and measure how long the resident takes to walk the 10 feet, suggested Wassenaar. "Normal is 9 to 15 seconds," she said, noting that the majority of people in assisted living can do it in 15 to 20 seconds. "But when you start getting over 25 seconds to walk 10 feet, you have a more frail population"

Watch for this: People who are unsteady on their feet and have a balance issue will do a three-point turn where they are almost holding themselves up with one foot while they do the turn, Wassenaar noted. "You can also tell a person's confidence level by how well they do the" test, she added.

Editor's note: See the special two-page focus on falls in the accreditation and risk management section, later in this issue.