



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Clinical Practice: Frequently Asked Question

Q: Does ASPAN have any recommendation regarding best practice for fall risk assessments? Are there any recommendations for fall prevention?

A: Keeping patients safe, especially once they have been exposed to anesthetic agents, reminds us this is a particular challenge for perianesthesia nurses everywhere. Falls are a global health problem. Patients, especially those over the age of 65,² should be screened and assessed for the risks of falling. The fall risk screening starts with the preoperative assessment, whether in person or by phone. This screening is confirmed on the day of surgery. Generally included in the health history is a report of a recent or remote fall history. Fall risk assessment on the day of surgery starts as the patient enters the facility.

The ASPAN 2023-2024 Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements Practice, *Components of Assessment and Management of the Perianesthesia Patient*¹ highlights data elements for assessment during all phases of care. Throughout the continuum of care, the RN elicits information regarding mobility, history of falls, and sensory limitations that can contribute to falls. Factors to consider include historical and current medications, the age of the patient, or other comorbidities that alter the ability to maneuver without an assistive device. It is important to continually assess patients for risks for falls throughout the perioperative period. In one study that focused on the development of clinical practice guidelines for fall prevention, the use of an assessment tool for fall risk was not recommended². Keeping our patients safe is the goal of every perianesthesia nurse. Evaluation of your institution's fall prevention strategies is essential.

References:

1. American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. 2023-2024 perianesthesia nursing standards, practice recommendations and interpretive statements. Cherry Hill, NJ; ASPAN.
2. Schoberer D, Breimaier HE, Zuschneegg J, Findling T, Schaffer S, Archan T. Fall prevention in hospitals and nursing homes: Clinical practice guideline. *Worldviews Evid Based Nurs*. 2022 Apr;19(2):86-93. doi: 10.1111/wvn.12571.

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