

FIGURE 5.3 **FALL RISK EVALUATION TOOL**

Check each of the following criteria that apply to the patient being assessed. A patient who shows the presence of any of the criteria in the general category/more than one of the other categories (physical status, mental status, medication, ambulatory device, or other) should be considered at risk for falling.

General data category

- History of previous falls
 Functional-assessment score > 50, with a mental status questionnaire score < 23

Physical status category

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness/balance problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigability | <input type="checkbox"/> Sight impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unsteady gait | <input type="checkbox"/> Debilitated or weak | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> Paresis | <input type="checkbox"/> History of alcoholism |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Seizure disorder IV lock | |

Mental status category

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusion (illogical thinking) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of familiarity with immediate surroundings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impaired memory and judgment | <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to understand/follow directions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disoriented to person/place/time | <input type="checkbox"/> Nocturnal disorientation |

Medication category

- Drugs that have a diuretic effect
 Drugs that suppress thought processes/create a hypotensive effect (e.g., narcotics, sedatives, psychotropics, hypnotics, tranquilizers, antidepressive drugs, and antihypertensives)
 Drugs that increase gastrointestinal motility (i.e., laxatives, enemas, and cathartics)

Ambulatory device category

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walker | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crutches | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cane | |

Restraining device category

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jacket restraint | <input type="checkbox"/> Soft restraint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belt restraint | <input type="checkbox"/> Gerichair tabletop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vest restraint | <input type="checkbox"/> Side rails |

**Note: The use of restraint devices has been substantially decreased in nursing homes but continues to be a concern in acute care hospitals. Restraint or seclusion may be imposed only to ensure the immediate physical safety of the patient, a staff member, or others and must be discontinued at the earliest possible time (Warren, 2014).