# Balance Screening for Patients with Diabetes

*An audiologist's guide to helping patients with diabetes for the non-vestibular clinic*

Diabetes can affect a patient's balance and vestibular system; therefore, it is important that audiologists are aware of how they can determine if further investigation is required. The following information has been put together to help audiologists working in a non-vestibular setting.

## Case History Questions

There are certain questions that an audiologist can add to their case history that can assist in determining if a balance screening should be performed:

- **Do you suffer from dizziness or poor balance?** (please describe without using 'dizzy')
- **Have you fallen?** (if yes, how many times, were there any injuries)
- **Have you changed any movement patterns?**
- **Are you fearful of falling? Do you have to think about your balance?**
- **Do you have any numbness, tingling, or loss of sensation in your feet?**

If any of these answers are 'yes', it is recommended that a balance screening be performed (e.g., bedside tests) and/or a referral be made for vestibular assessment.

## Balance Screening

There are many different tools that can be used for balance screening, which often come from our colleagues in physical therapy. The following are some commonly used balance tools with links to helpful resources for learning how to use them in your clinic:

- The **Timed Up and Go (TUG)** test – an easy-to-use screening test for falls in the older adult population
  Timed Up and Go (TUG) Test - Setup and Instruction (Instructional Video)[1]
  Timed Up and Go (TUG) Test - Toolkit (Additional Resources)[2]

- The **Modified Clinical Test of Sensory Interaction in Balance (mCTSIB)** – another easy-to-use screening test that assesses balance in adults; this will require a piece of foam for the unstable surface conditions (a 'compliant surface'); test conditions 1 and 2 is also referred to as the **Romberg test**, which is another balance screening tool that is sometimes used on its own (no foam required)
  Modified Clinical Test of Sensory Interaction in Balance or mCTSIB (Instructional Video)[3]
  Modified Clinical Test of Sensory Interaction in Balance or mCTSIB (Additional Resource)[4]

If the results of the balance screening tools indicate that your patient is at a greater risk for falls, ensure that appropriate referrals are made (e.g., refer for vestibular assessment, refer to falls clinic).

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[1] Mission Gait. (2020a). *Timed up and go (TUG) test – setup and instruction* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=brhnt4KM_Oc

[2] Mission Gait (2020b). *Outcome toolkits* [Website resource]. Retrieved from: https://www.missiongait.org/outcome-toolkits

[3] Vestibular Today (2020). *mCTSIB (vestibular examination)* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=1VqhGlb697U

[4] sralab.org (2013). *Modified clinical test of sensory interaction in balance* [PDF document]. Retrieved from: https://www.sralab.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/204Lmctsib.pdf

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