



Cerebral Palsy (CP)

1. What is Cerebral Palsy (CP)?

Cerebral Palsy is a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture. CP is the most common motor disability in childhood. CP is caused by abnormal brain development or damage to the developing brain that affects a person's ability to control his or her muscles.

The word "cerebral" refers to the brain's cerebrum, which is the part of the brain that regulates motor function. "Palsy" describes a paralysis of voluntary movement in certain body parts.

2. What are symptoms of CP?

Symptoms of CP vary from person to person. All people with CP have problems with movement and posture. A person with CP might need to use special equipment to be able to walk, or might not be able to walk at all and might need lifelong care. A person with mild CP, might walk a little awkwardly, but might not need special help. CP does not get worse over time, though the exact symptoms can change over a person's lifetime. Many have related conditions such as:

- Intellectual disability
- Seizure problems
- Scoliosis
- Joint problems
- Problems with vision and/or hearing

3. How is CP Diagnosed?

Diagnosing CP at an early age is important to the well-being of children and their families. Diagnosing CP can take several steps:

- Developmental Monitoring- tracking a child's growth and development over time.
- Developmental Screening-short test to see if the child has specific developmental delays.
- Developmental and Medical Evaluations- to diagnose the specific type of disorder that affects a child.
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4. What are some treatments and Intervention Services for CP?

There is no cure for CP, but treatment can improve the lives of those who have the condition. After a CP diagnosis is made, a team of health professionals works with the child and family to develop a plan to help the child reach his or her full potential. Common treatments include:

- Medicines
- Surgery
- Braces
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy

*No single treatment is the best one for all children with CP

5. Cause and Risk Factors

CP is caused by abnormal development of the brain or damage to the developing brain that affects a child's ability to control his or her muscles. There are several possible causes of the abnormal development or damage.

*People used to think that CP was mainly caused by lack of oxygen during the birth process.

Brain damage that leads to CP can happen before birth, during birth, within a month after birth, or during the first years of a child's life, while the brain is still developing.

Resources

- Cerebral Palsy of North Jersey - <http://cpnj.org>
- CDC Facts About Cerebral Palsy - <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/cp/facts.html>
- Understanding Cerebral Palsy - <https://www.cerebralpalsyguide.com/cerebral-palsy>
- 25 Cerebral Palsy Resources You Should Know About - <http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2013/11/06/20-cerebral-palsy-resources-you-should-know-about/>