



# Cerebral Palsy

## Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral palsy (CP) is an umbrella term describing a non-progressive condition in which a person has difficulty walking, and making and/or controlling body movements.

CP is the most common childhood disability, and most affected children will survive into adulthood. CP results from damage to the areas of the brain that control movements, occurring in early life, or before birth.

The severity and type of movement difficulty can vary, it can include problems with muscle stiffness, involuntary movements, weakness, a decrease in coordination, balance and tremors.

In some individuals, the whole body may be affected, however in others it may be parts of the body such as one or two limbs. In severe cases, speech and swallowing can be affected.

## Signs and Symptoms

- Infants may show a difference or delay in expected developmental movement skills, often evident as a difference in movement between the right and left sides of the body.
- Delay in speech and/or cognitive/intellectual development

## Classification

- Spastic: individual has muscle stiffness and it is difficult to stretch affected areas
- Dyskinetic: individual has uncontrolled, involuntary, recurring body movements
- Ataxic: individual has a loss of muscular coordination, resulting in shakiness, tremor, and impairment of accuracy
- Mixed

## Causes

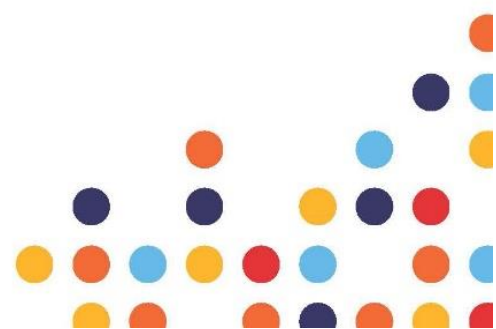
CP is the result of damage to the parts of the brain that control movement, and as such, there are many possible causes. In many cases no specific cause is able to be identified. For those that are some of the more common causes include:

- Premature birth, as the brain is vulnerable to damage in the early weeks of life
- Hypoxia ( a deficiency in the amount of oxygen getting to the tissues of the body)
- Respiratory distress
- Stroke in childhood
- Particular infections in pregnancy and infancy
- Problems with brain formation during pregnancy, sometimes due to a genetic condition

## Treatment

There is no cure for CP, so treatment is aimed at improving quality of life. Some aspects of treatment are:

- Maximising independent living, often with the aid of occupational therapists and other allied health teams
- Maximising physical activity
- Managing pain and other medical conditions as required



## References

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[https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact\\_sheets/Cerebral\\_palsy/](https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Cerebral_palsy/)

