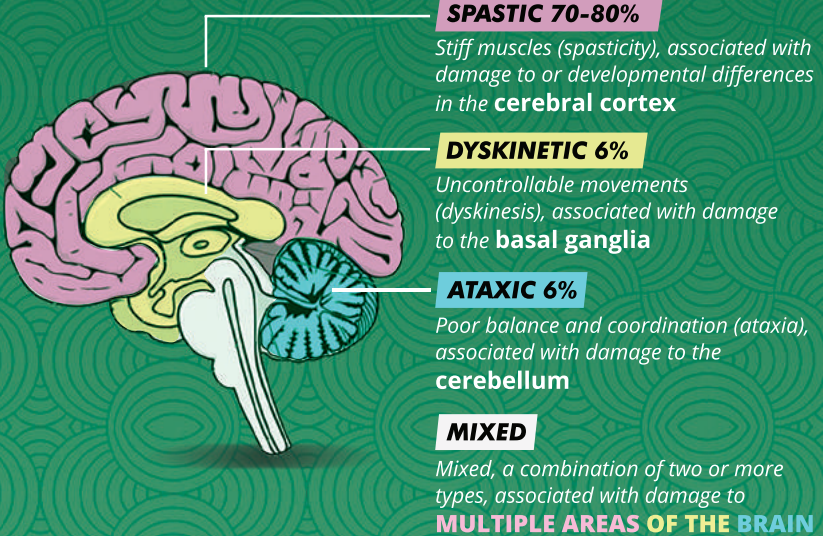


Cerebral Palsy (CP) Factsheet

What is CP?

CP is a neurological disorder of movement and posture. It affects muscles, mobility, balance and posture. It is often associated with difficulties of learning, communication, eating, hearing and vision.

There are four main types of CP, depending on the affected area of the brain:



Spastic CP is further classified based on number and side of the body affected due to the brain damage.



Monoplegia



Hemiplegia



Diplegia



Quadriplegia

What are the early signs of CP?

Note: *These signs are only suggestive – they can be present in other situations as well. A full neurological examination is required for CP to be diagnosed.*

- Delayed motor milestones, for example:
 - Hands remain fisted after the age of 3 months
 - Not holding head stable after the age of 4 months
 - Not sitting without support at the age of 10 months
 - Not walking without help after the age of 18 months or walking in an odd way.
- Marked stiffness or floppiness of muscles.
- Arm and leg joints not opening fully.
- A relatively small size (circumference) of head
- Between the age of 1-2 years the child may appear to be clumsy or uncoordinated – keeping legs too close to each other while walking, walking on tip toes or stumbling easily.
- Between the age of 3-4 years the child may have difficulty climbing, kicking ball or throwing a ball.

Knowing about motor milestones can help you identify any delay in motor development that may indicate the presence of CP.

Things to look out for in a child diagnosed with CP

Note : *Not every child with CP would have these difficulties, but it is better to be cautious.*



A child with CP may have :

- Epilepsy or seizures
- Impaired hearing or vision – please get it tested.
- Feeding difficulties – Please seek advice about how best to feed your child
- Delay in talking or understanding of language
- Poor attention and planning difficulties affecting learning
- Learning difficulties or intellectual disability
- Constipation
- Poor bladder control

In spite of no ongoing disease affecting the brain, the muscle and bone changes can get worse with time.

Early intervention with movement therapy and posture management can reduce the worsening of body structure and function.

Whom to approach when I spot early signs of CP?

If you spot signs that worry you about your child's health, then seek counsel from a certified

Pediatrician



Why did my child develop CP?

CP occurs due to:

- Abnormal brain formation, either due to genetic or unknown causes
- Brain injury sustained at birth during delivery,
- Premature birth



How is CP diagnosed by a doctor?

A Pediatrician will review delays in motor development in the child.

- Any significant delay in posture, mobility, reflexes are carefully assessed in the child through Clinical neurological examination.
- Brain imaging such as CT scan or MRI and EEG maybe recommended in some children to identify the area of brain damage and ascertain its cause and any associated difficulties.



Confirming a diagnosis of CP by a paediatrician or neurologist is very important as other neuro-developmental disorders may be mislabeled as CP.

DO NOT HESITATE IN ASKING FOR CONFIRMATION OF A DIAGNOSIS





Evidence-based therapies for CP management



Note :

An individual child's therapy needs depends on -

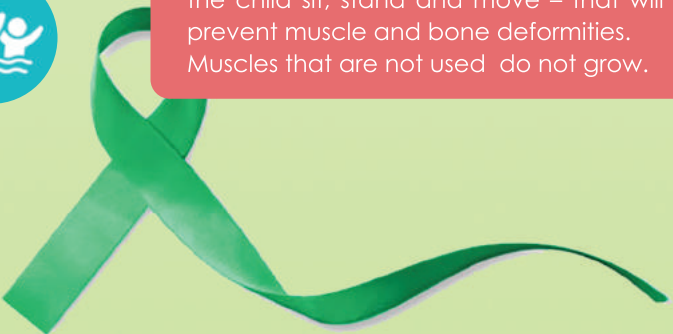
- the age of the child
- type of CP
- severity of CP, & associated difficulties



- Physical therapy
- Speech and language therapy, and use of devices to aid in communication
- Occupational therapy
- Behaviour therapy
- Medications to control symptoms, such as muscle spasms or seizures
- Spine or spinal cord surgery (to repair scoliosis or reduce spasticity)
- Muscle-release and tendon-lengthening surgery
- Orthotics, braces or other devices to help with positioning, standing or muscle control



Find out, from your therapist, how to help the child sit, stand and move – that will prevent muscle and bone deformities. Muscles that are not used do not grow.



Caring for a child with CP - feeding and nutrition

Children with CP often have trouble chewing and swallowing – they can have chest infections because of the food going down the wrong way into their lungs.



You must make sure that:

- You are feeding in the correct posture (hold the head up while feeding - do not feed the child with head down or in a lying posture)
- The consistency of food is right – it is not too watery or too thick
- You are giving enough nutrition – take advice from a clinician about the type of food suitable for your child. Nutrition is required for muscle growth.

You are not alone – seek help and guidance



Do what is best for your child

- ✓ Learn, think and plan how to help your child
- ✓ Involve the entire family
- ✓ Engage the child in fun activities
- ✓ Communicate and interact with your child as much as you can
- ✓ Keeping a regular range of motion of limbs is key to management of CP. The more the limbs are used the lesser will be the degree of deformity.



Remember to take care of yourself in the process

- ✓ Do not ignore your other children
- ✓ Engage in regular physical activities and relaxation for your well-being
- ✓ Remember to spend time with the rest of your family.



Help give back to your community

- ✓ Join a peer support group near you.
- ✓ Share your experience with other parents
- ✓ Educate your community and dispel myths about CP

Is there a cure for CP?

REMEMBER,



- There is no cure for the brain injury that caused the CP, but children with CP can grow and have a thriving and fulfilling life.
- Start the treatment as early as possible to achieve the best outcomes for the child.
- Involve the whole family in helping the child .
- Seek help from other parents and professionals.
- Ignore the social stigma, you child is a special child and you are a special parent.

March is CP awareness month

- With early intervention, support from family members and educators, individuals diagnosed with CP are thriving and leading successful lives.
- Do not let a diagnosis get in the way of happiness and well-being of that individual.



QUACK WATCH

REMEMBER,

that there are a lot of people out there who are ready to take advantage and make money out of claims of having a cure for CP.

Please do not let your vulnerability & desperation get in the way of your child's health.

Informed and empowered parents provide effective care for their children.



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