

Cerebral Palsy

FACTS:

- Cerebral Palsy (CP) means difficulty with movement, muscle control and/or balance.
- The child's muscles may be too stiff (high tone), too floppy (low tone) or both in different areas (trunk floppy, but tight limbs). Both arms and legs may be affected, or just the legs, or the arm and leg on one side of the body.
- CP is caused by damage to the part of the brain that controls the muscles. The damage can happen before the baby is born, during birth or right after birth (especially if the baby is born too soon). It does not get worse over time. It is not contagious.
- Most children with CP have normal intelligence. Some may have difficulty with speaking or eating because the muscles in their mouths are affected, but they have normal understanding.
- These children are at slightly higher risk for seizures, which can usually be controlled with medication. If the child has a seizure, see a doctor!



Cerebral palsy affects a child's ability to use his or her muscles.



Most children have normal intelligence even if they can't speak clearly.

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TREATMENT:

- The brain damage cannot be treated, but the child's ability to take daily care of himself or herself can be improved.
- Physical therapy, braces and other treatments can help the child be more independent.
- Talk normally to the child and encourage him or her to be as independent as possible. These children are usually bright and eager.
- Help the child with poor balance to sit securely by using chairs with arms, pillows, rolled up blankets, etc.
- Gentle twisting and stretching can help the child with tight muscles move more easily. Softly bouncing the "floppy" child on your lap or a big ball before an activity can help him or her have more control.



With therapy, children with CP can live happy and productive lives.



These children are usually bright and eager to learn!