

# Types of Cerebral Palsy

**Cerebral palsy (CP)** is a neurologic (brain) disorder that changes the way the brain communicates with muscles. It is usually caused by abnormal development or a brain injury that creates lifelong difficulty with movement, strength, and balance. Cerebral palsy is classified into different types based on the types of movements the condition causes or the area of the brain injured. Sometimes children fit into more than one classification of cerebral palsy.

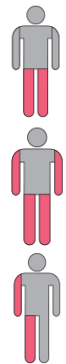
## Spastic cerebral palsy

**Spasticity** refers to increased tone (**hypertonia**) or tightness in a muscle, and it can range from mild to severe. Spastic cerebral palsy:

- Is the most common type of CP
- Causes resistance when someone tries to move the child's arm or leg
- Causes jerky movements, especially when the child is startled
- If severe, may limit the flexibility or movement of joints

Spastic cerebral palsy is further classified based on how many areas of the body are involved:

- **Spastic diplegia** ("di" means two) indicates spasticity in either both arms *or* both legs.
- **Spastic quadriplegia** ("quad" means four) indicates spasticity in both arms *and* both legs.
- **Spastic hemiplegia** ("hemi" means half) indicates spasticity along one half of the body, such as the right arm and the right leg.



## Ataxic cerebral palsy

**Ataxia** refers to difficulty with coordination of movement and can affect any part of the body. Ataxia CP:

- Affects balance and sense of position in space
- May appear as clumsiness, inaccuracy, or instability
- Makes movements look unsmooth and sometimes jerky
- Can cause a tremor or rapid shaking in the hand or arm
- May cause a child to unintentionally reach past a toy or another object
- May cause a child to appear unstable walking or have a staggering gait; they might stand or walk with legs farther apart to keep from falling
- Can also change the way a child talks or the way their eyes move

## Dyskinetic (or athetoid) cerebral palsy

**Dyskinetic** refers to movements that are uncontrolled, purposeless, and often rigid. This type of CP:

- Involves unintentional excessive movements
- Can include movements in the face, arms, legs, or back

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- Is more likely to occur when the child is trying to perform a movement
  - For example, if a child is trying to close his fingers around a toy, he may also bend his wrist and elbow.

## Signs of cerebral palsy

The symptoms of cerebral palsy change as a child grows. This is not a sign of the condition worsening, however.

A baby younger than 6 months might:

- Have trouble holding up their head
- Seem stiff or floppy all over or in parts of their body
- Stretch their back and neck away from the person who is holding them
- Cross or stiffen their legs when being picked up

A baby older than 6 months might:

- Have trouble controlling their head and neck
- Reach with only one hand while the other is held closed in a fist

A baby older than 10 months might:

- Crawl by pushing off with one hand and leg while dragging the other hand and leg
- Not be able to sit up by themselves

A child older than 1 year might:

- Not crawl
- Not be able to stand when holding onto something

A child older than 2 years might:

- Not be able to stand or walk; may try to walk on tiptoes
- Not be able to push a toy with wheels

## Resources and References:

<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/cerebral-palsy>

<https://www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/cerebral-palsy.html>

<https://cerebralpalsy.org/>

<https://cerebralpalsy.org.au/our-research/about-cerebral-palsy/what-is-cerebral-palsy/types-of-cerebral-palsy/>