



Cerebral Palsy (Static Encephalopathy): Frequently Asked Questions

What is cerebral palsy?

Cerebral palsy, also known as CP in short, is a disorder which affects the body movements and posture of your child. It is a permanent disorder and does not go away although its effect on the child and family can be reduced with proper care. It does not progress and with care, the problems improve.

What causes cerebral palsy?

Cerebral palsy results from brain damage occurring in a baby or young child before or during the birth, or after birth till the first 2 years of life. The damage affects the messages being received by and sent from the brain, as well as the way in which the brain interprets the messages it receives.

Do they have any other problem also?

Children with cerebral palsy are commonly seen to have some other problems also like, problems in seeing, hearing, speech, feeding, constipation and learning. They may also suffer from fits (epilepsy). As they cannot move around as freely as other children, the way they experience people and things around them is different from normal children.

Is there a cure for cerebral palsy?

The damage to the brain in cerebral palsy is permanent and so there is no permanent cure. But a child's brain has capacity to grow and modify itself with training. So, with proper care and training, the other areas of the brain try to adjust for the missing functions and hence, they improve. The damage does not progress but child may appear to become worse if there are other associated problems like repeated fits, infections, poor nutrition etc.

Is cerebral palsy genetic?

Cerebral palsy occurs as a result of brain injury. It is not passed on genetically, and it is not contagious. Though genetic factors can play a part in causing cerebral palsy in a child, this does not mean that every child in your family will face similar challenges.

Can the mother take a test during pregnancy to determine if their next baby has cerebral palsy?

No, there are no such tests. A pregnant mother should tell her doctor about the previous child, get the cause of cerebral palsy evaluated and carry the pregnancy under proper supervision and care.

What is the life expectancy of someone with cerebral palsy?

Cerebral palsy is not a terminal disease. Children often go to schools and colleges. Each child is affected differently and the disability depends on the severity of underlying damage. But the children may be more prone to life threatening complications if there is uncontrolled epilepsy or severe respiratory infections.

Will my child be able to live on his or her own one day?

Many people with cerebral palsy are able to live independently as adults, though they may require assistance with some tasks and chores. People with cerebral palsy are able to work, have children, travel, and live very full lives. However, the degree of your child's condition and the amount of assistance he or she requires may limit independence somewhat. Proper therapy can help increase your child's level of freedom.

What are the treatments options for my child with cerebral palsy?

Treatments for cerebral palsy can help manage or improve its symptoms. In some cases, people can make significant improvements with different treatments. Sometimes a combination of several treatments has to be given to get improvement. But it should be started early for best results, especially physical therapy for stiff muscles. The options are:

Physical therapy to stretch tight muscles and help prevent deformities. It also helps the child to adapt to his surroundings based on his level of activity.

Medicines like muscle relaxants help to loosen up stiff and contracted muscles. Children who experience seizures might need anticonvulsant medications to treat them. Medicines can also be given by the doctor for drooling, constipation, nutritional care etc.

Surgery can lengthen tendons of stiff muscles and cut some nerve roots in the spinal cord to reduce spasticity. Surgery is only recommended for severe cases.

Others: Training in activities of daily living, braces to support joints, walking aid, botulinum toxin

Long-term care at a specialized facility, where a team of doctors, nurses and specialists work together to provide the best care for your child's condition.

Participation in social activities, schooling, playing with other children, spending good time with family members help in overall development of these children

Can stem cell cure the child from cerebral palsy?

No. Till now it is not proven by any scientific study so far. Use of stem cell in cerebral palsy is still under research. International authorities have not approved the use of stem cell in clinical practice.

Can we massage the child for improvement in tightness?

Fast and deep massage is not advisable in all cases of cerebral palsy except hypotonic one

Can CP children be admitted to normal schools?

Yes. No school can deny admission of your child provided he/she is ready for that education.