

# What is Cerebral Palsy?

Cerebral palsy is a physical disability that affects movement and posture.

It is the most common physical disability in childhood.

You can help advance our knowledge and research into cerebral palsy by joining a Cerebral Palsy Register. Find out more at [worldcpday/cpregisters](http://worldcpday/cpregisters)

**17 million**  
people with cerebral palsy  
worldwide

## MOTOR TYPES

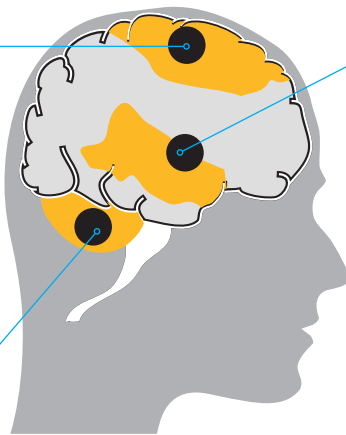
**SPASTIC:** 80-90%.  
Most common form. Muscles appear stiff and tight. Arises from Motor Cortex damage.

**DYSKINETIC:** 6%.  
Characterised by involuntary movements such as dystonia, athetosis and/or chorea. Arises from damage to the Basal Ganglia.

**MIXED TYPES:**  
A number of children with CP will have two motor types present e.g. spasticity and dystonia.

**ATAXIC:** 5%

Characterised by shaky movements. Affects balance and sense of positioning in space. Arises from Cerebellum damage.

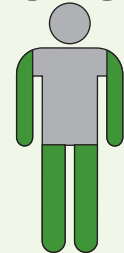


## PARTS OF THE BODY

Cerebral palsy can affect different parts of the body e.g.

### SPASTIC QUADRIPEGIA/ BILATERAL

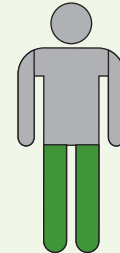
LIMBS AFFECTED  
1 2 3 4



Both arms and legs are affected. The muscles of the trunk, face and mouth are often also affected.

### SPASTIC DIPLEGIA/ BILATERAL

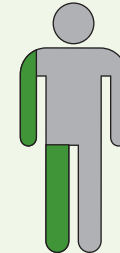
LIMBS AFFECTED  
1 2 3 4



Both legs are affected. The arms may be affected to a lesser extent.

### SPASTIC HEMIPLEGIA/ UNILATERAL

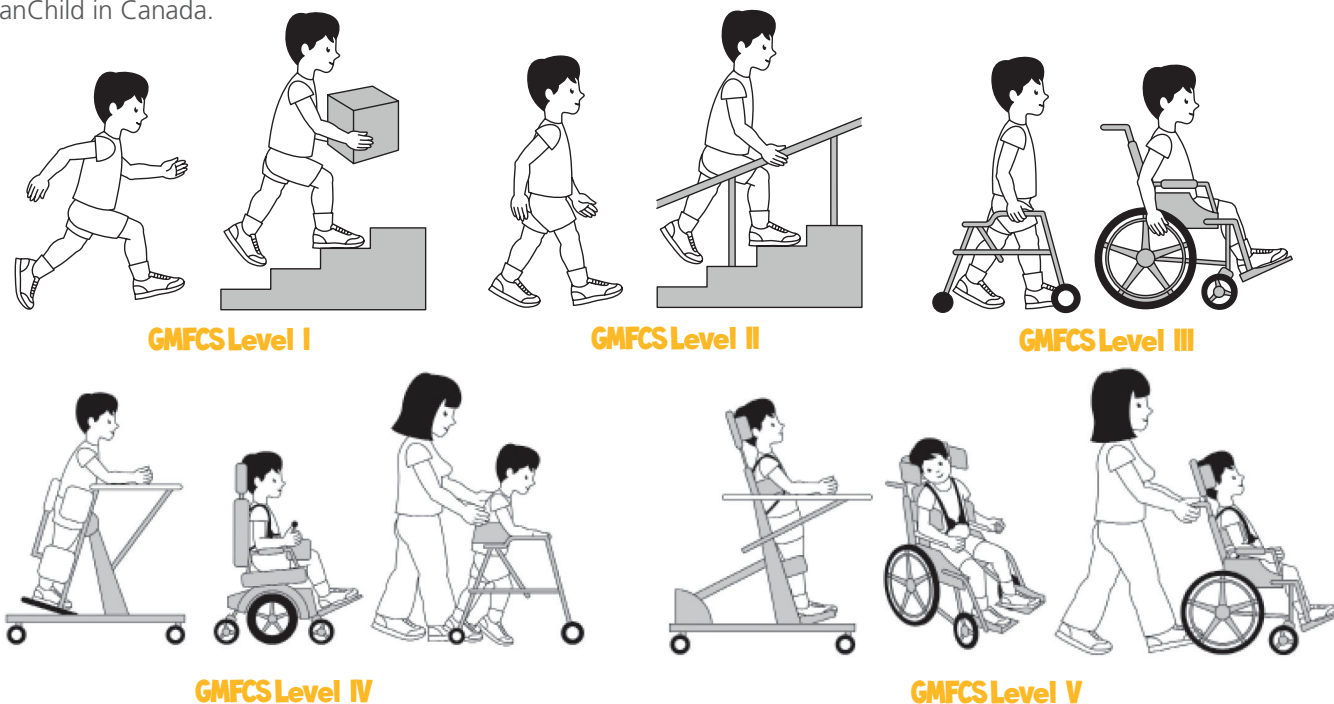
LIMBS AFFECTED  
1 2 3 4



One side of the body (one arm and one leg) is affected

## GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

The gross motor skills (e.g. sitting and walking) of children and young people with cerebral palsy can be categorised into 5 different levels using a tool called the Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS) developed by CanChild in Canada.



GMFCS Illustrations 6-12: © Bill Reid, Kate Willoughby, Adrienne Harvey and Kerr Graham, The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne.

## MANUAL ABILITY

At least two thirds of children with cerebral palsy will have movement difficulties affecting one or both arms. Almost every daily activity can be impacted.



## ASSOCIATED IMPAIRMENTS

Children with cerebral palsy may also have a range of physical and cognitive impairments.

**1 in 3**

is unable to walk



**1 in 4**

is unable to talk



**3 in 4**

experience pain



**1 in 4**

has epilepsy



**1 in 4**

has a behaviour disorder



**1 in 2**

has an intellectual impairment



**1 in 10**

has a severe vision impairment



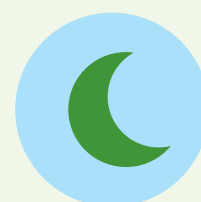
**1 in 4**

has bladder control problems



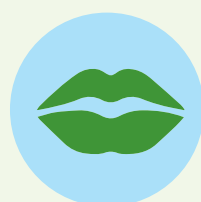
**1 in 5**

has sleep disorder



**1 in 5**

has saliva control problems



## World Cerebral Palsy Day [worldcpday.org](http://worldcpday.org)

Proudly supported by The Allergan Foundation

**References:** Novak I, Hines M, Goldsmith S, Barclay R (2012). Clinical prognostic messages from a systematic review on cerebral palsy. *Pediatrics*. Nov 2012;130 (5). Palisano R, Rosenbaum P, Walter S, Russell D, Wood E & Galuppi B (1997). Development and validation of a Gross Motor Function Classification System for children with Cerebral Palsy. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 39, 214-223. CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research [www.canchild.ca](http://www.canchild.ca). Australian Cerebral Palsy Register, Birth Years 1993-2009, September 2016.

