



Cerebral Palsy Among Children

FACT: Each year about 10,000 babies born in the United States develop cerebral palsy.

Cerebral palsy is a disorder of movement or coordination caused by an abnormality of the brain. More than 80% of people with cerebral palsy developed it either before they were born or before they were a month old. In many instances, the cause of the brain abnormality is unknown.

About half of the people who have cerebral palsy need to use devices—such as braces, walkers, or wheel chairs—to help them get around, and almost 70% have other disabilities, primarily mental retardation. Depending on the severity of their disability, people with cerebral palsy may need specialized medical care, educational and social services, and other help throughout their lives from both their families and communities.



A recent study of the extra economic costs associated with cerebral palsy showed that the lifetime costs per person was about \$800,000 (in 2000 dollars). These estimates do not include important expenses, such as caregiver costs for children or adults with cerebral palsy, that may have to be borne by families.

At CDC, we have one of the few programs in the world that conducts active, ongoing monitoring of the number of children with cerebral palsy in a large, multiracial metropolitan area.

In 1991, CDC started the **Metropolitan Atlanta Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (MADDSP)** to monitor the number of 3- to 10-year-old children living in the metropolitan Atlanta area who have one or more of the following conditions: mental retardation, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, and vision impairment. CDC added autism spectrum disorders to the program in 1998.

MADDSP also provides opportunities for special studies through which CDC staff members can identify risk factors for these disabilities and determine whether steps taken to prevent disabilities have been effective.

Related CDC Activities

- Epidemiologic Studies of Reproductive and Developmental Outcomes – Denmark, includes special studies looking at whether intrauterine infection during pregnancy increases the risk for cerebral palsy.
- The Children's Longitudinal Development Study, an ongoing study of risk factors for developmental disabilities among children identified through MADDSP.
- The Follow-up Study of Children with Developmental Disabilities, which examines current functioning and the presence of secondary conditions among young adults with cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities.

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for full, productive living.

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