

Cerebral palsy (CP) is an umbrella term that describes a group of non-progressive, but often changing, motor impairment disorders arising in the early stages of brain development. By definition, the condition that caused Cerebral Palsy neither resolves nor progresses. The motor impairment can affect a child's ability to use his or her hands and legs, or maintain normal balance and posture. Notably, cerebral palsy is considered to be the most common motor disability among children.

CP may be caused by abnormal brain development or damage to the developing brain during labor and delivery. While many children diagnosed with CP will have problems with both their posture and gross or fine motor movements, some also may develop intellectual and cognitive disabilities; problems with vision, hearing, or speech; changes in the spine; and joint issues like contractures.

Types of Cerebral Palsy

Specialists subclassify different motor conditions depending on the type and severity of the movement problems and limitations involved. There are several types of CP:

Spastic Cerebral Palsy

Spastic CP is the most common type of motor impairment. Specifically, it has a diagnosis rate of about 80% of all patients with CP. These patients often have abnormal control of voluntary muscle tone, muscle stiffness and awkward body movements. There are several well-known types of spasticity:

Quadriplegia involves all four limbs with the arms being equally or more affected than the legs.

Diplegia is used to describe more severe involvement of the legs than the arms.

Left hemiplegia involves the left side of the body only, with the upper limbs usually more affected than the lower limbs. Right Hemiplegia involves the right side of the body.

Dyskinetic Cerebral Palsy

Children with dyskinetic CP will often have difficulty controlling the movement of the limbs, resulting in their inability to sit and walk properly. They will often have uncontrollable involuntary movements (also described as athetoid), either writhing and slow or rapid and jerky.

Some parents also report problems when their child is sucking, swallowing, or talking, as the impairment will often extend to a child's face and tongue. Additionally, children with this condition can have muscle tones that change from being too tight one day to exceedingly loose the next (known as hypertonia or hypotonia).

Ataxic Cerebral Palsy

A child with ataxic CP will have problems with balance and coordination, and walking is generally unsteady. Additionally, these children may have difficulty with quick movements or other activities that require greater control, like writing.

Thus, CP can be classified as right or left hemiplegia, diplegia, quadriplegia, ataxia, and athetosis, with other distributions of spasticity and impairment making it important for every child to obtain a thorough clinical evaluation by an experienced caretaker who can analyze the predominant pattern for purposes of classifying the type of CP.

Symptoms of Cerebral Palsy

Notably, the symptoms of cerebral palsy differ from one individual to the next. While one child with severe CP might require special equipment to walk or move thus needing lifetime care, another child with mild CP might be able to walk with little assistance.

An early sign of a child with CP is a delay in reaching developmental, motor or movement milestones. Specifically, infants and toddlers might have problems rolling over, crawling, sitting, or taking their first few steps. In babies younger than six months, caretakers may notice that their heads lag the moment you pick them up or while they lay on their backs. In some instances, babies often feel stiff, floppy, or overextend themselves on their back and neck the moment you cradle them in your arms.

In babies over six months, they might be unable to roll over in either direction. Additionally, they may often struggle to bring their hands together or pull the same to their mouths. Finally, you might notice that they keep one hand fisted while they reach out with the other.

For babies older than ten months, their crawl will have a distinctive lopsidedness, where they might appear to push off with just one set of limbs while dragging the

other. Additionally, they might tend to scoot around on their buttocks instead of crawling on all fours.

How do cerebral palsy injuries occur?

CP is often the result of an injury or a problem that occurs during brain development prior to birth or within the first formative years of life. Children born prematurely have a higher chance of developing CP. Additionally, when fetuses or newborns do not get enough blood, oxygen, or other nutrients before or during birth, they can develop brain injuries resulting in a diagnosis of CP. Lastly, if a child suffers a significant head injury or is exposed to an infection that affects the brain, such as meningitis, he or she can develop CP.

While specialists have made significant steps towards understanding the causes of CP, some of which are preventable with timely and proper medical care, they have yet to discover all possible causes of cerebral palsy.

How common are cerebral palsy injuries?

The neurologic and cognitive impairments resulting from the many CP disorders can cause significant emotional and financial strain on the affected child and his or her family members. Rates of CP vary around the world and by geographical region, but overall, CP in the United States is around 2-2.5 per 1,000 live births; with fluctuations commonly occurring by state and hospital.

Who is liable for cerebral palsy injuries?

CP can result from medical malpractice. There are many different health care providers who can be responsible for a child's brain injuries, including hospitals, obstetricians, nurses, midwives, residents, family practitioners, neonatologists, and others. With the help of Dov Apfel and the other experienced birth injury lawyers working with him, families can collect evidence and consult with experts who can determine if the baby and mother received timely and proper medical care and whether the negligence was responsible for the child's injuries.

Filing a Cerebral Palsy Claim

Dov Apfel and the other experienced attorneys working with him can help you determine if your child's CP diagnosis resulted from medical negligence. Before you can file a lawsuit, it is critical to know the statute of limitations, as it pertains to

medical malpractice cases in in the state where the baby was born. Specifically, each state has a time restriction for how long you have to file a lawsuit to seek compensation from the negligent practitioner or healthcare facility in Chicago or elsewhere. If you fail to file a lawsuit by the deadline, you may be forever barred from recovering compensation for your child's injuries.

What compensation can I receive for a cerebral palsy injury?

A child who suffers injuries from negligent medical care and CP may require extensive medical care. Mounting medical expenses can put a strain on a family's finances. One of the advantages of pursuing a medical malpractice claim, when the injuries are caused by a negligent healthcare provider or Hospital, is to obtain the funds to pay for the medical care, drugs, equipment, and attendant care needed to help a child achieve his or her full potential. The harms and losses that may be compensated may also include lost wages, pain and suffering, loss of enjoyment of life, therapy, housing, and other services.

How can Dov Apfel or a Chicago or National cerebral palsy lawyer help me?

Dov Apfel and the other Chicago and National cerebral palsy attorneys whom work with him can help you tackle the nuances and complications that come with investigating and managing medical malpractice lawsuits. Dov Apfel has years of experience and knowledge to properly investigate all types of cases and take the steps to obtain fair and full compensation for each child and family. Whether a mother's hypertension, diabetes, or other problem was mismanaged during the pregnancy, or whether the baby's problems were caused by trauma, misuse of a vacuum or forceps, or lack of oxygen and blood flow, our attorneys can investigate your unique situation to determine if the injuries were caused by medical negligence. Additionally, we have worked with qualified and experienced medical experts who can evaluate every case and provide expert testimony when appropriate.

Successful Cerebral Palsy Cases

As a National cerebral palsy lawyer, Dov Apfel has investigated and litigated cases in Illinois and throughout the United States. The cases throughout Illinois and the

United States involve CP and birth defect injuries that may include, but are not limited to claims that: a cesarean section was delayed and not performed on time; a baby showed signs of oxygen deprivation and fetal distress or nonreassuring fetal heart tracings during labor; too much force was used causing a traumatic brain or a brachial plexus injury; a mother's hypertension, preeclampsia or diabetes was mismanaged; a baby was not properly resuscitated or intubated after birth; or a maternal or fetal infection was not timely recognized or managed.

Dov Apfel and the Chicago and National birth injury lawyers who work with him can offer you peace of mind with our commitment to our clients and their cases. For instance, Dov Apfel has a long history of securing favorable settlements for children who suffer brain damage and are diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

At Levin & Perconti, we pride ourselves on providing compassionate and dedicated representation to our clients as a nationally renowned law firm with years of experience dealing with serious injuries, wrongful deaths, medical malpractice, and birth injury and cerebral palsy lawsuits.

Contact Dov Apfel about your cerebral palsy medical malpractice case today. The Chicago and National CP attorneys at Levin & Perconti can provide you with a free initial consultation to review your case and determine how we can best help you.