

Myth Busting Content

The purpose of this content pillar is to bust common myths about cerebral palsy and lay down the facts about the scale and presentations of the condition.

Myth: In most cases cerebral palsy is caused by lack of oxygen at birth

Fact: For a small number of people, cerebral palsy is due to complications around the time of birth. For most people, cerebral palsy results from a complex combination of risk factors during pregnancy, around the time of birth, and in the first years of life.

Myth: All people with cerebral palsy have an intellectual disability

Fact: Cerebral palsy affects movement and posture, and the majority (55%) of people living with cerebral palsy have no intellectual disability. For those that do, the level of intellectual disability can vary from mild to severe.

Myth: Cerebral palsy is rare.

Fact: Cerebral palsy is the number one childhood physical disability and one of the most common causes of chronic disability in children in general. There are over 17 million people across the world living with cerebral palsy.

Myth: People with cerebral palsy don't live that long

Fact: Most people living with cerebral palsy are healthy and can expect to live for as long as the average person in the general population.

Myth: People with cerebral palsy can't live independently.

Fact: Many adults living with cerebral palsy are independent, while others may still require some help. Adults with cerebral palsy who live independently may make use of the following strategies:

- Assistive technologies, including mobility aids and transfer equipment.
- Modifications to the home and workplace, such as lower counter tops for wheelchair users.
- Personal care assistance for potentially difficult tasks, such as household chores.

Myth: People with cerebral palsy can't have children

Fact: Many adults living with cerebral palsy can and do have children of their own. There is no evidence cerebral palsy impacts a person's fertility. Additionally, only a minority of cerebral palsy cases is caused by genetic disorders, and the condition is not usually hereditary.

Myth: All people with cerebral palsy are unable to speak

Fact: Most people living with cerebral palsy communicate using speech. People with cerebral palsy may also communicate their needs and wants using gestures, symbol systems and speech generating devices.



Goal: Provide the cerebral palsy community with engaging share graphics that can be used across their digital channels to raise awareness about the facts of cerebral palsy in their broader digital network

Myth: Cerebral palsy is a disease / is contagious

Fact: Cerebral palsy is not a disease and cannot be transmitted in any form from one person to another. You can hold, play or interact with a child or adult without risking any kind of transmission of cerebral palsy to yourself.

Myth: People living with cerebral palsy have poor quality of life

Fact: In high-income and many middle-income communities, most people living with cerebral palsy are healthy and enjoy meaningful study, hobbies and sport. For example, a European survey of 431 adolescents with cerebral palsy found their quality of life to be on par with their able-bodied peers; the only area in which they reported lower quality of life was 'social support from friends and peers'.

Myth: People who have cerebral palsy will use a wheelchair

Fact: Although there are people with severe cerebral palsy who use a wheelchair, there are numerous others who can walk and run without any assistance. Only 1 in 4 cannot walk. Cerebral palsy affects individuals differently, and its impacts vary from person-to-person.

Myth: Cerebral palsy is the same for everyone.

Fact: Cerebral palsy is actually an umbrella term for a diverse group of neurological disorders that may involve very different symptoms. The three main types of cerebral palsy are:

- Spastic cerebral palsy
 - Dyskinetic cerebral palsy (dystonic and/or athetoid cerebral palsy)
 - Ataxic cerebral palsy
- Spastic is the most common type of cerebral palsy. Some people can also have a combination of the aforementioned three types.

Myth: Cerebral palsy is a progressive condition

Fact: Cerebral palsy is by definition not progressive. Symptoms can however change over the course of a lifetime due to other factors such as the person's general health and well-being, ageing, or other underlying conditions. The brain injury that causes cerebral palsy does not progress over time but its impact on the body, especially the musculoskeletal system, may change a person's level of mobility, function or pain over time. Optimising the physical health of a person with cerebral palsy is important.