

12 | 15 | 2009 Posted By Regan Zambri & Long

Cerebral Palsy Can Be Caused by Improper Care Before, During and After Childbirth



Posted by [Catherine Bertram](#), Partner

"Some people come into our lives, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same." -Franz Peter Schubert

The medical staff at the [Mayo Clinic](#) define "Cerebral palsy" (CP) is a general term for a group of disorders that appear during the first few years of life and affect a child's ability to coordinate body movements. Cerebral palsy can cause muscles to be weak and floppy, or rigid and stiff.

In the United States, cerebral palsy occurs in about two to four out of every 1,000 births. The disorder is usually caused by brain injuries, including lack of oxygen, also called hypoxia or anoxia. Cerebral palsy isn't curable. Medical evidence supports theories that infections, birth injuries, and poor oxygen supply to the brain before, during, and immediately after birth result in up to 15% of cases.

Between 35% and 50% of all children with CP will have an accompanying seizure disorder and some level of mental retardation. They also may have learning disabilities and vision, speech, hearing, or language problems. Often parents are overwhelmed when their child is given this diagnosis and rightly so. There are many questions and no clear answers. As a parent of a child with special needs, you may be asking:

- Why did this happen to my child?
- How am I going to pay for what my child needs now and in the future?

Every circumstance is unique, just like every child and every family. If you have questions about that care you received or the birth experience or the care your child received after birth and you think it may be a factor in your child's condition, you can get answers. We have significant experience handling [these types of cases](#) and have many nationally known experts who are willing to review your child's case and determine what happened. I was [Director of Risk Management](#) at a major teaching hospital in DC and have experience reviewing these cases from both the patient's side and the hospital's side. We also have [a nurse-attorney on staff at my firm](#) who worked in a local hospital on the labor and delivery unit so she has special expertise in reviewing the records and determining what happened.

As a parent and as a patient advocate I urge you to get answers if you have these questions. You owe it to yourself and your child. Click [here](#) for some great quotes for families with special needs children and pass this on to other parents you know who have children with special challenges for those days when a few words may lighten our hearts.

About the author:

***Catherine Bertram** is board certified in civil trials and was recently nominated as a 2010 Super Lawyer for Washington, D.C. Ms. Bertram has 20 years of trial **experience** and is unique in that she was formerly the Director of Risk Management for Georgetown University Hospital so she brings a wealth of knowledge to her practice including how hospitals should be run and what doctors and nurses can do to protect patients. She is a partner with the firm and devotes **her practice** to the representation of patients and families of loved ones who have been injured or lost due to medical errors. Ms. Bertram lectures regularly to lawyers and health care providers, nationally and locally, regarding patient safety, medical negligence and other related issues. She has also recently published a chapter in a medical textbook. She can be reached by email at cbertram@reganfirm.com or by phone 202-822-1875 in her office in Washington, D.C.*