

# Dyspraxia

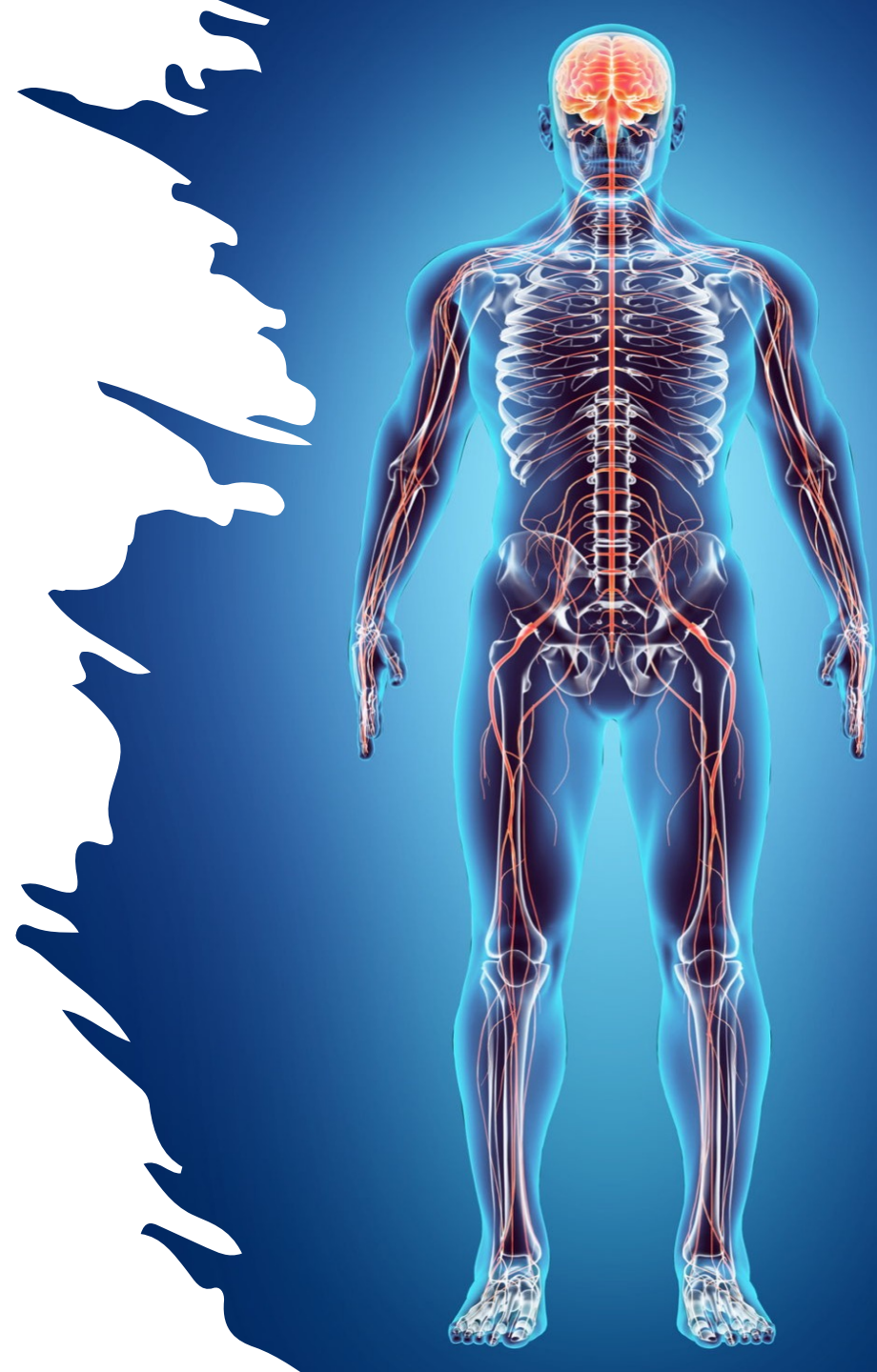
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POSITIVE STEPS



# What is Dyspraxia?

- Dyspraxia, also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), is a neurological developmental disorder that affects the nervous system and impacts an individual's ability to plan and process movement tasks.
- Dyspraxia is a hidden condition which is still poorly understood.
- Dyspraxia is a surprisingly common condition, affecting all areas of life, such as movement and coordination, that makes it difficult for children and adults to carry out activities that others may take for granted.



# Causes of Dyspraxia

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- Dyspraxia is the result of a disruption in the way that messages are passed between the brain and the body, however, the cause of this disruption is unknown.
- Risk factors for an increased likelihood of someone having dyspraxia include:
  - Being born prematurely, before the 37th week of pregnancy.
  - Being born with a low birth weight.
  - Being male, with 4 out of every 5 children with evident dyspraxia being boys.
  - Having a family history of DCD, although it is not clear exactly which genes may be involved in the condition.
  - The mother drinking alcohol or taking illegal drugs while pregnant.

A photograph of a baby sitting on a light-colored rug, looking up and to the side. The baby is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a white diaper. The background is a plain white wall.

# Signs and Symptoms of Dyspraxia in Very Early Childhood

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- Delays in reaching normal developmental milestones, such as:
  - Sitting
  - Crawling
  - Walking
  - Speaking
  - Standing
  - Becoming potty trained
  - Building up vocabulary
- Unusual body postures
- Difficulty playing with toys that involve good co-ordination



# Signs and Symptoms of Dyspraxia in Early Childhood

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- Problems performing subtle movements, such as tying shoelaces, doing up buttons and zips, using cutlery, and handwriting.
- Difficulties getting dressed.
- Problems carrying out playground movements, such as jumping, playing hopscotch, catching/kicking a ball, hopping, and skipping.
- Problems with classroom movements, such as using scissors, colouring, drawing, playing jigsaw games.
- Difficulties concentrating and will fidget more than other children.
- Difficulties going up and down stairs.
- A higher tendency to bump into things, fall over, and drop things.
- Difficulty in learning new skills.

# Signs and Symptoms of Dyspraxia in Later Childhood

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- Many of the challenges from early childhood do not improve or only improve slightly.
- Tries to avoid sports.
- Learns well on a one-on-one basis, but nowhere near as well in class with other children around.
- Reacts to all stimuli equally (not filtering out irrelevant stimuli automatically).
- Mathematics and writing are difficult.
- Spends a long time getting writing done.
- Does not follow or remember instructions.
- Is badly organized.



# Signs and Symptoms of Dyspraxia in Adulthood

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- Poor posture and fatigue.
- Trouble completing normal chores.
- Poor hand-eye coordination and difficulty coordinating both sides of the body.
- Clumsy movement and tendency to trip over.
- Notable lack of rhythm when dancing or exercising.
- Unclear speech, often word order can be jumbled.
- Grooming and dressing more challenging, such as shaving, applying makeup, fastening clothes, tying shoelaces.
- Easily frustrated, low self-esteem, moods swings and erratic behaviour.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Difficulty distinguishing sounds from background noise.
- Extremely sensitive to taste, light, touch, and/or noise.
- Lack of awareness of potential dangers.



# Diagnosis of Dyspraxia

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- Diagnosing dyspraxia utilises an array of health care professionals, such as GPs, paediatricians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists.
- Children with suspected Dyspraxia are usually assessed using a method called the Movement ABC, which involves testing the child's:
  - Gross motor skills (their ability to use large muscles that co-ordinate significant body movements, such as moving around, jumping and balancing)
  - Fine motor skills (their ability to use small muscles for accurate co-ordinated movements, such as drawing and placing small pegs in holes)
- The child's assessment findings are scored and compared with the normal range of scores for a child of their age.
- Sometimes a psychologist may assess the child's mental ability to confirm that it is within the normal range for their age.
- The child's medical history, such as problems during birth and any delays reaching developmental milestones, will be taken into account during the assessment.
- A family medical history, such as whether any family members have been diagnosed with DCD, will also be considered.
- Once the assessment process is complete, the healthcare professionals involved will produce a report on your child's condition.





# Treatment for Dyspraxia

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- Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy
  - Evaluate how the child manages with everyday functions at home and at school before helping to develop skills specific to daily activities that the child finds difficult.
- Speech and Language Therapy
  - Assess the child's speech and then implement a treatment plan to help them to communicate more effectively.
- Perceptual Motor Training
  - The individual is set a series of tasks that gradually become more advanced with the aim of improving the child's language, visual, movement, and auditory skills
- Equine Therapy
  - Aiming to stimulate and improve the individuals cognition, mood, and gait parameters.
- Active Play
  - Any play that involves physical activity with the aim of combining the child's physical and emotional learning, development of language, special awareness, and understanding of their senses.

# Support Available



The Dyspraxia Foundation is a country wide charity in England and Wales that offers support individuals and families affected by dyspraxia/DCD. They provide advice and information on the condition and aim to raise awareness. Their contact details and social below allow for people to easily access information about dyspraxia, keep up to date with the latest news and gain instant friendly guidance and support. The foundation also offer local support groups throughout England and Wales, for more information, see [https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/about\\_pages/local-groups/](https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/about_pages/local-groups/).

- Website: <https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk>
- Phone: 01462 454986 (9am -1pm, Tuesday –Friday)
- Email: [info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)
- Facebook: Dyspraxia Foundation
- Instagram: [dyspraxiafoundation](https://www.instagram.com/dyspraxiafoundation)
- Twitter: @ DYSPRAXIAFDTN

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