

5. Get genetic counselling if you are at risk. (Risk factors: Age over 35 years, you or your partner have a family history of genetic defects such as Tay-Sachs disease, Sickle Cell Anaemia, Hydrocephalus, Phenylketonuria or agile X-syndrome.)
6. If the pregnant woman had multiple miscarriages or stillborn deliveries, counselling might be considered.
7. Avoid medications, except those prescribed by your doctor.
8. Avoid infections through transmission. Many infections, if contracted during pregnancy, can cause serious harm to your baby.
9. The delivery should be conducted in a proper hospital under expert obstetrician.
10. The hospital should have a good back-up for newborn care.
11. The pregnant woman must continue to visit her doctor. There is no substitute for expert medical care. Abnormalities may be detected and possibly corrected or reduced with constant care.
12. The first ten minutes after birth are the most important moments when the transition from the protection of mother's womb to the independent world occurs. This transition requires expert help to prevent long-term problems.

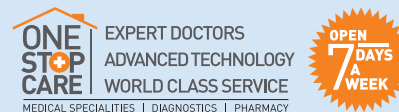
How is Mental Retardation diagnosed?

Several hundred causes of mental retardation have been discovered, but in about one-third of the affected people, the cause remains unknown. One of the common causes

of mental retardation is diminished oxygen supply to the brain at or near birth due to various causes. The diagnosis of mental retardation requires confirmation of significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning (i.e. an IQ standard score of 70 - 75 or below) in association with deficits in two or more of the following ten adaptive skill areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure and work.



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All medical staff in HCL World Class Family Health Centres are employed by HCL Healthcare

MENTAL RETARDATION - CAUSES AND PREVENTION

Read on to find out.



 **1800 103 7070**
FOR APPOINTMENT

What is Mental Retardation?

Mental Retardation is a state of lack of ability or necessary skills of the mind that are important for performing day-to-day tasks. In medical terms, the disability of the mind can range from mild to severe thus affecting the individual or child's ability of communication, learning, reasoning, decision-making and problem solving. In short, these are individuals or children with limited intellectual functioning and behaviour.



What are the causes of Mental Retardation?

1. Consuming alcohol during pregnancy. It increases the chance of birth related defects.
2. Lack of proper vaccination during pregnancy.
3. Smoking by pregnant women. Smoking can restrict the baby's normal growth inside the womb. It can make the child underdeveloped and underweight at birth and more prone to illness in the first critical weeks of life.

4. Defective genes or chromosomes inherited from the parents. PKU (Phenylketonuria), chromosomal abnormalities have been related to some forms of mental retardation such as Down's Syndrome and Fragile X-syndrome.
5. Certain medications can also cause birth defects.
6. Exposure to X-rays during pregnancy.
7. Sexually transmitted diseases during pregnancy can cause a baby to have seizures, brain damage hydrocephalus (accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain) and eye disease.
8. Physical malformations of the brain and TORCH group of Intrauterine Infections (e.g. Cytomegalovirus); HIV Infection originating in pre-natal life may also result in mental retardation.
9. Malnutrition, glandular disorders, diabetes, and many other illnesses of the mother during pregnancy.
10. Any birth condition of unusual stress may injure the infant's brain. Birth Asphyxia (decreased oxygen to brain), pre-maturity and low birth weight cause serious problems more often than any other condition.
11. Childhood diseases such as Septicemia (blood infection), Pneumonia, Whooping Cough, Chicken Pox, Measles, and Hib disease may lead to Meningitis and Encephalitis that can damage the brain. Accidents such as a blow to the head or near drowning case.
12. Disease producing conditions, inadequate medical care and environmental health hazards.
13. Substances such as lead and mercury can cause irreparable damage to the brain and nervous system.

How to prevent the possibility of Mental Retardation affecting your child?

1. Visit your doctor at least three months before planning your pregnancy. He/She can advise you immunisation, diet, exercise and other ways to help you have a healthy baby.
2. Good nutrition is essential for both you and your baby. Consume a high calorie and protein diet during pregnancy including vegetables, fruits, breads, cereals, pulses and dairy products.
3. Avoid alcohol during pregnancy and negate the chance of your baby having any alcohol-related birth defects.
4. A pregnant woman should be immunised against Rubella, Tetanus, Measles and Hepatitis-B, as they may directly affect the unborn baby.

