



# Information for Patients & Caregivers

## What to Know About Detecting Childhood Disabilities?

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+ Children can develop a number of disabilities that may affect their vision, hearing, intellectual ability, physical health, or mental health.

+ It is important that any such disability is detected as soon as possible so that appropriate treatment can be provided as soon as possible.

### + WHAT CAUSES DISABILITIES IN CHILDREN?

There are many different disabilities that have many different underlying causes, some can be inherited, others may result from problems during pregnancy and childbirth, or accidents during the child's early years.

Irrespective of the cause, your doctors will check your child regularly at different ages to ensure your child is developing normally and any problems are detected as soon as possible.

After childbirth, each new mother is provided with a copy of the Qatar Child Health Book.

The book contains valuable information about regular and vaccinations. Keep it safe and ensure it is completed by the doctor at each check visit.

Over 9000 Children are registered as having a disability in Qatar.

### + EXAMINATION FOR CHILDHOOD DISABILITIES

- All newborn children are routinely examined for disabilities prior to discharge from hospital.
- In addition, all children should be routinely examined at the following ages:
  - 2 months.
  - 4 months.
  - 6 months.
  - 9 months.
  - 12 months.
  - 18 months.
  - 30 months.
  - 4 years.
- If your child was born at less than 32 weeks of pregnancy or weighs less than 1500g at birth, they will also have their eyes checked for visual problems prior to discharge from hospital.
- If your child has spent more than 48 hours in a neonatal intensive care unit, they will also be checked for hearing problems prior to discharge home and then again at 2 months, 1 year and before school, at age 4-6 years.

If you think your child may have a disability, talk to your primary care doctor in the first instance.



### + WHAT YOUR DOCTOR WILL DO

- Routine examination usually involves a discussion with the parents about how the child is developing and any family history of genetic problems.
- The doctor will then examine the child thoroughly and may perform some tests of vision or hearing.
- If the child is older, the doctor may want to speak to the child themselves in detail about the problems they are experiencing.
- If an abnormality is found, further tests may be necessary.
- In some cases it may be necessary to refer your child to a paediatric specialist to have some of the tests performed or to get their opinion on treatment.
- Unless the Specialists advises otherwise, your Primary Care doctor should remain your first point of contact in any case.

### + SPECIALIST CARE

When your child is seen by a Paediatrician, the doctor will talk to you about your child's development and any problems you have noticed.

The doctor may ask how your child is at home, in school, and in the community.

The doctor will usually play with your child to see how the child learns, speaks, behaves, and moves. The doctor may then do a thorough examination and tests to evaluate the problem in more detail.

If your child's disability is complicated several specialists will work together in a team to ensure your child's needs are met and their disability is treated as effectively as possible.

Be sure to tell the doctor about any concerns you have.

Make sure you attend all appointments or reschedule them in good time, if they are not convenient.

The doctors will also provide you with information on good nutrition for your child, the schedule of vaccination, and ways of preventing injury to your child.

Make sure you follow their advice.

### + TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment options available will depend on the nature of the disability that is found and the underlying cause.

In some cases a cure may not be possible, in which case the specialist will advise on what can be done to reduce the impact of the disability on your child's growth and development.

Treatments and support, may include:

- Medication.
- Surgery.
- Rehabilitation.
- Early childhood development and learning.
- Family focused support.
- Social and psychological treatments.
- Special Education.
- Assistance to support mainstream school attendance and childcare.

### + COPING WITH STRESS

Having a child with a disability and undergoing multiple visits to doctors and tests, can be a very stressful experience for the child as well as the whole family.

- If you are having difficulty coping with the stress or your feeling unhappy, see your Primary Care doctor and share with them what you are experiencing.
- Primary Care doctors are trained to help with these types of problems may be able to provide advice and guidance on how to cope.
- They can also refer you to support services and, if necessary, provide medication to help.

### + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on the early detection of childhood disabilities can be found in the National Clinical Guideline published by The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) Qatar. The Guideline is available to the public from the MoPH website: [www.moph.gov.qa](http://www.moph.gov.qa).

