

Microcephaly

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About Microcephaly:

- It is a **rare neurological condition** in which an **infant's head is much smaller** than the heads of other children of the same age and sex.
- Sometimes detected at birth, microcephaly often occurs when there is a problem with brain development in the womb or when the brain stops growing after birth.
- It can be caused by a variety of **genetic and environmental factors**. Children with microcephaly often have developmental issues.
- Most children with microcephaly also have a **small brain, poor motor function, poor speech, and abnormal facial features**, and are intellectually disabled.
- The most common **causes include:**
 - **Infections during pregnancy:** toxoplasmosis (caused by a parasite found in undercooked meat), Campylobacter pylori, rubella, herpes, syphilis, cytomegalovirus, HIV and Zika;
 - **Exposure to toxic chemicals:** Maternal exposure to heavy metals like arsenic and mercury, alcohol, radiation, and smoking;
 - Pre- and perinatal injuries to the developing brain (hypoxia-ischemia, trauma);
 - Genetic abnormalities such as Down syndrome; and severe malnutrition during fetal life.

- **Symptoms:** Many babies born with microcephaly may demonstrate no other symptoms at birth but go on to develop epilepsy, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, hearing loss and vision problems.
 - **Treatment:** There is no specific treatment for microcephaly.
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Q1 What are genetic disorders?

Genetic disorders occur when a mutation (a harmful change to a gene, also known as a pathogenic variant) affects your genes or when you have the wrong amount of genetic material.

Source: [How an altered protein and fussy neurons conspire to cause microcephaly](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/microcephaly/>

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