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Ataxia

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Definition

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Definition

By Mayo Clinic staff

Ataxia describes a lack of muscle coordination during voluntary movements, such as walking or picking up objects. A sign of an underlying condition, ataxia can affect your movements, your speech, your eye movements and your ability to swallow.



Cerebellum and brainstem

Persistent ataxia usually results from damage to your cerebellum — the part of your brain that controls muscle coordination. Many conditions may cause ataxia, including alcohol abuse, stroke, tumor, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis. It's also possible to inherit a defective gene that may cause one of many ataxia variants.

Treatment for ataxia depends on the underlying cause. Adaptive devices, such as walkers or canes, might help you maintain your independence despite your ataxia. You may also benefit from physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy.

[Symptoms](#)

References

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*Cited in Cuellar v. Joyce,
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