# DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

There are many definitions of disabilities (Voc Rehab, Social Security, VA, etc.).   According to the ADA (<u>**The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**</u> as restored in 2008), a disability is any <u>**LONG-TERM**</u>  mental or physical impairment that <u>**SUBSTANTIALLY LIMITS**</u> one or more major life activities, like:

> **Walking, standing, lifting, bending**
>
> **Speaking, hearing, communicating**
>
> **Seeing**         **Eating**
>
> **Breathing**       **Sleeping**
>
> **Learning, reading, concentrating, thinking**
>
> **Caring for oneself**  (grooming, budgeting, cooking, dressing, etc.)
>
> **Performing manual tasks** (doing housework, laundry, driving, etc.)
>
> **Working** (earning enough money to live on)

Also included in the definition of major life activities is <u>**MAJOR BODILY FUNCTION**</u>.  Examples include digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, immune system, and reproductive functions.

The following are just a few of the disabilities covered by the ADA <u>if one or more major life functioning areas is substantially limited</u>:

> Down syndrome and other kinds of intellectual disabilities; Asperger's and others on the autism spectrum; learning disabilities (like dyslexia); ADD & ADHD; mental illnesses (such as clinical depression, PTSD, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia); Tourette Syndrome; cerebral palsy; spina bifida; muscular dystrophy; cystic fibrosis; multiple sclerosis; ALS; limb amputation; brain injury; spinal cord injury; polio; being blind or deaf; diabetes; epilepsy; emphysema/COPD; Parkinson's disease; Alzheimer's disease; stroke; severe asthma; severe arthritis; and alcoholism (if one is in a recovery program).   In addition, many people with significant orthopedic problems, genetic disorders, and chronic and serious medical conditions are covered by the ADA.

An individual is also protected under the ADA if s/he <u>**HAS A RECORD**</u> of an impairment (like having a history of cancer), **or if s/he is <u>REGARDED</u> as**

**having such an impairment** (like being badly burned).