

# **DEFINITION OF DISABILITY**

There are many definitions of disabilities (Voc Rehab, Social Security, Veteran's Administration, the US Census, etc.). According to the ADA (The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as restored in 2008), a disability is any **LONG-TERM** mental or physical impairment that **SUBSTANTIALLY LIMITS** 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.), or  
**Working** (earning enough money to live on).

Also included in the 2008 definition is **MAJOR BODILY FUNCTION**. Examples include digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, immune system, and reproduction.

The following are **JUST A FEW OF THE DISABILITIES & CONDITIONS** covered by the ADA (**if at least one major life functioning areas is substantially limited**):

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; traumatic brain injury; spinal cord injury; polio; blindness; deafness; diabetes; epilepsy; emphysema/COPD; severe asthma; Parkinson's disease; Alzheimer's disease; stroke; severe arthritis; and alcoholism (if one is in a recovery program). In addition, many people with significant orthopedic problems, genetic disorders, and many other chronic & serious medical conditions are covered by the ADA.

An individual is also protected under the ADA if s/he **HAS A RECORD** of such an impairment (like having a history of cancer), or if s/he is **REGARDED** as having such an impairment (like being badly burned – although not functionally disabled).