

# Down Syndrome

**DRAFT**

## Information for New and Expecting Parents

After receiving the news that your baby has or may have Down syndrome, it is normal for you to have questions, concerns, and fears. You are not alone in your feelings or in your adventure with your new baby. Below is current and accurate information about Down syndrome to assist you in your journey.



### **About Down Syndrome**

Down syndrome occurs when an individual has a full or partial extra copy of the 21st chromosome. Typically, people have 46 chromosomes in each cell of their bodies. People with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes in each or some of their cells. Down syndrome occurs in approximately 1 of 700 live births. It starts at conception and nothing the mom or dad did or did not do causes Down syndrome.

Children with Down syndrome will grow and develop, but their progress may be slower than a typical child. The mental, behavioral, and developmental ability of people with Down syndrome varies widely. It cannot be predicted before a person is born. Currently, the average life expectancy for people with Down syndrome is about 60 years.

People often have misconceptions about Down syndrome based upon stereotypes from the past. However, we are happy to inform you that people with Down syndrome are able to live fulfilling and meaningful lives. Current medical advancements and therapy opportunities have left the sky as the limit for individuals with Down syndrome. They can walk, talk, go to school, work, and enjoy life.

### **Understanding Down Syndrome**

- People with Down syndrome are more similar to other people than they are different. Just as with typical children, with nurture, care, and a supportive environment, they can live purposeful lives.
- Babies with Down syndrome usually have developmental delays and low muscle tone. They benefit from early intervention, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy to make improvements.
- 50% of babies with Down syndrome will have one or more health issues. This may include heart or gastrointestinal issues that can require surgery. They have higher chances for feeding and digestive issues, hearing loss, vision impairments, and respiratory infections. Thankfully, most of these conditions can be treated with good health care.
- Appropriate medical care for people with Down syndrome is very important. It can have a significant impact on the person's physical and intellectual development.
- Individuals with Down syndrome have a variable range of intellectual disability from mild to moderate (not typically severe).
- Individuals with Down syndrome can be fully included in the community, sports, and activities.
- Children with Down syndrome often attend regular schools in regular education classes with differing levels of support. There are many college programs for people with intellectual delays.
- People with Down syndrome can have regular jobs or ones with support, live independently or in a group setting, and have friends and intimate relationships.

## Getting Support

In Idaho we have great local Down syndrome organizations who are ready to help and support you. Please reach out to any of the organizations below. Also visit [www.healthandwelfare/downsyndrome](http://www.healthandwelfare/downsyndrome) for a list of resources on Down syndrome.

### Northern Idaho

DS Connections Northwest  
3839 W. Prairie Ave.  
Hayden, ID 83835  
Phone: 877-733-3955  
Email: [info@dsconnections nw.org](mailto:info@dsconnections nw.org)  
Website: [www.dsconnections nw.org](http://www.dsconnections nw.org)

### Western Idaho

Treasure Valley Down Syndrome Association  
PO Box 1404  
Meridian ID 83680-1404  
Phone: 208-954-7448  
Email: [president@idahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:president@idahodownsyndrome.org)  
Website: [www.idahodownsyndrome.org](http://www.idahodownsyndrome.org)

### Eastern Idaho

Eastern Idaho Down Syndrome Family Connect  
PO Box 591  
Rigby, ID 83442  
Phone: 208-716-6504  
Email: [info@easternidahodownsyndrome.org](mailto:info@easternidahodownsyndrome.org)  
Website: [www.easternidahodownsyndrome.org](http://www.easternidahodownsyndrome.org)



## National Resources

Below are national organizations that have a wealth of knowledge to share. Check them out!

**Down Syndrome Pregnancy-**  
[downsyndromepregnancy.org](http://downsyndromepregnancy.org)

**Lettercase-**  
[lettercase.org](http://lettercase.org)

**National Down Syndrome Society-**  
[ndss.org](http://ndss.org)

**National Down Syndrome Congress-**  
[ndscenter.org](http://ndscenter.org)

**Global Down Syndrome Foundation-**  
[globaldownsyndrome.org](http://globaldownsyndrome.org)

