

People with Down syndrome have

- Some characteristic physical features
- Some health and development challenges
- Some level of intellectual disability.

Because no two people are alike, each of these things will vary from one person to another.

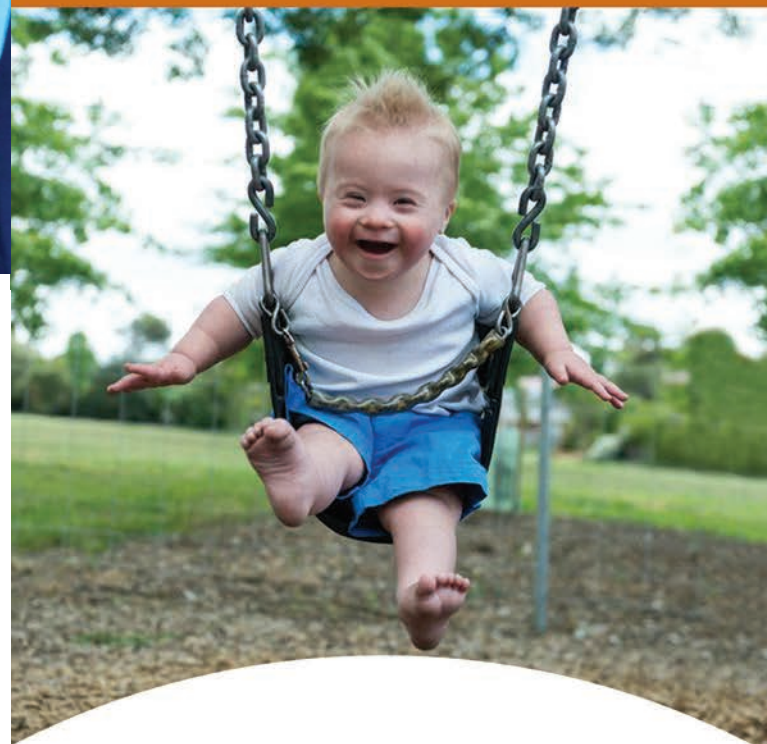
People with Down syndrome, whatever their age, are people first. They are people with abilities, strengths and weaknesses like everyone else. They may have some additional needs but people with Down syndrome all over the world are now leading full and independent lives.

Quality health care, education, community involvement and support makes a real difference to outcomes for children and adults with Down syndrome.



Where can I find out more?

What do you know about Down syndrome?



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Down Syndrome Victoria would like to thank our families for letting us use images of their beautiful children



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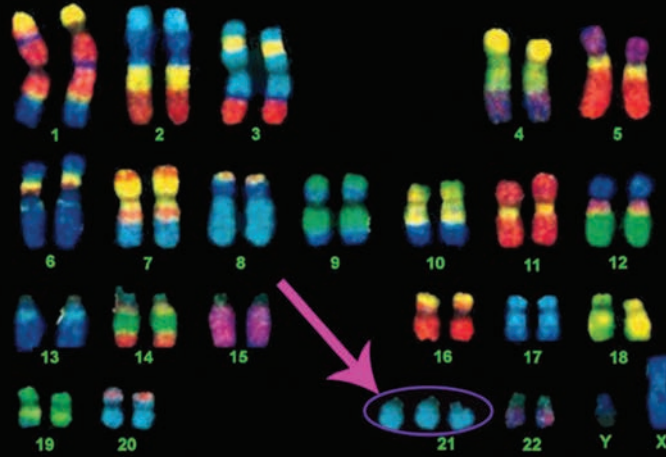
About Down syndrome

Down syndrome is the world's most common chromosomal disorder and cause of intellectual disability. It is not an illness or disease. Our bodies are made up of millions of cells. In each cell there are 46 chromosomes. The DNA in our chromosomes determines how we develop. Down syndrome is caused when there is an extra chromosome. People with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes in their cells instead of 46. They have an extra chromosome 21, which is why Down syndrome is also sometimes known as trisomy 21.



One in 1100 babies is born with Down syndrome in Victoria each year.

Down syndrome is not a new condition. Cases of Down syndrome have been recorded throughout history.



Down syndrome occurs at conception, across all ethnic and social groups and to parents of all ages. It is nobody's fault. There is no cure and it does not go away.

Down syndrome is the most common chromosome disorder that we know of. One of every 1100 babies are born with Down syndrome in Australia each year. This is lower than the worldwide rate of around 1 in 700 because of the high termination rates in Australia.

Common questions

Do all babies with Down syndrome have medical problems?

Having Down syndrome does not guarantee any medical condition. Most children with Down syndrome are healthy and active and will benefit from a variety of opportunities just like the other children in the family. However, children with Down syndrome do have a higher incidence of many treatable health problems.

What will they be able to achieve?

Like any other child, babies with Down syndrome vary in their abilities and achievements so it is not possible to predict a child's ability and future achievements at birth. Babies with Down syndrome tend to follow the same development stages as all children; including crawling, walking, babbling etc. however they often do these things later than other children.

