



Southern New Mexico Down Syndrome Families

“Bringing Families Together for a Better Tomorrow”

Facts About Down Syndrome

- Down syndrome occurs when an individual has a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome
- There are three types of Down syndrome: trisomy 21 (nondisjunction) accounts for 95% of cases, translocation accounts for about 4%, and mosaicism accounts for about 1%.
- Down syndrome is the most commonly occurring chromosomal condition. It occurs in one out of every 691 live births with more than 400,000 people living with Down syndrome in the United States.
- Nothing that a parent did or did not do during pregnancy causes Down syndrome.
- The chance of having a baby with Down syndrome increases as a woman gets older – from 1 in 1250 for a woman who gets pregnant at age 25 to about 1 in 100 for a woman who gets pregnant at age 40.
- While the age of the mother can be a factor, 80% of people with Down syndrome are born to parents under the age of 35.
- Down syndrome occurs in both boys and girls and all races and economic levels.
- A few of the common physical traits of Down syndrome are low muscle tone, small stature, an upward slant to the eyes, and a single deep crease across the center of the palm. Every person with Down syndrome is a unique individual and may possess these characteristics to different degrees or not at all.
- People with Down syndrome have an increased risk for certain medical conditions such as congenital heart defects, respiratory and hearing problems, gastrointestinal disease, thyroid conditions, etc. Many of these conditions are treatable, so most people with Down syndrome lead healthy lives.
- With advances in medical technology, individuals are living longer than ever before. Life expectancy for people with Down syndrome has increased from 25 in 1983 to 60 years old today.
- Individuals with Down syndrome possess varying degrees of cognitive delay, but the effect is usually mild to moderate and is not indicative of the many strengths and talents that each individual possesses.
- Opportunities today have never been greater including increased inclusion in schools, quality health care, employment opportunities, and positive support from family, friends, and the community that enables people with Down syndrome to reach their maximum potential and lead fulfilling lives.
- People with Down syndrome are capable, valuable, loving and unique individuals!

For more information about Down Syndrome, visit the NDSS Facts Page. See below:

<http://www.ndss.org/Down-Syndrome/Down-Syndrome-Facts/>