

## What is Down Syndrome?

Down syndrome is set of mental and physical symptoms that result from having an extra copy of Chromosome 21.

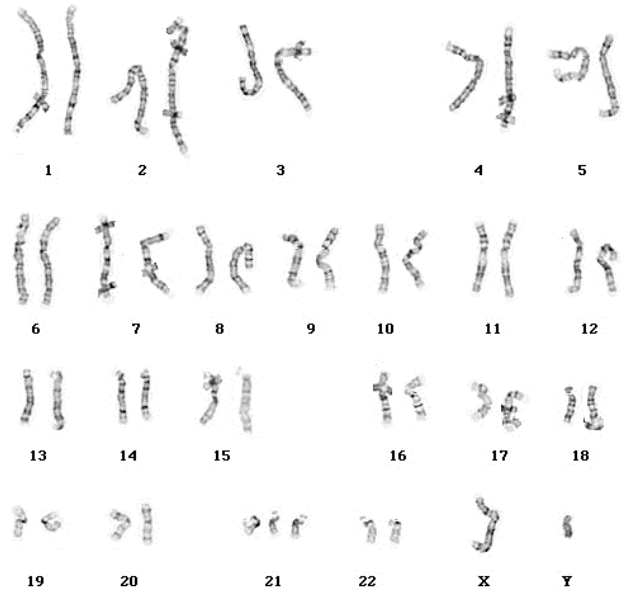
Normally, a fertilized egg has 23 pairs of chromosomes. In most people with Down syndrome, there is an extra copy of Chromosome 21 (also called **trisomy 21** because there are three copies of this chromosome instead of two), which changes the body's and brain's normal development.

## What is the treatment for Down syndrome?

Down syndrome is not a condition that can be cured. However, early intervention can help many people with Down syndrome live productive lives well into adulthood.

Children with Down syndrome can often benefit from speech therapy, occupational therapy, and exercises for gross and fine motor skills. They might also be helped by special education and attention at school.

Many children can integrate well into regular classes at school. For more information about treatments for Down syndrome, visit one of the Web sites provided below or ask your health care provider.



## Who is at risk for Down syndrome?

The chance of having a baby with Down syndrome increases as a woman gets older—from about 1 in 1,250 for a woman who gets pregnant at age 25, to about 1 in 100 for a woman who gets pregnant at age 40. But, most babies with Down syndrome are born to women under age 35 because more younger women have babies.

Because the chances of having a baby with Down syndrome increase with the age of the mother, many health care providers recommend that women over age 35 have prenatal testing for the condition. Testing the baby before it is born to see if he or she is likely to have Down syndrome allows parents and families to prepare for the baby's special needs.

Parents who have already have a baby with Down syndrome or who have abnormalities in their own chromosome 21 are also at higher risk for having a baby with Down Syndrome.

Once the baby is born, a blood test can confirm whether the baby has Down syndrome.

