

**Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office for Genetics and
People with Special Health Care Needs**

Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21) Fact Sheet

What Is Down Syndrome?

- A genetic disorder in which an infant has 47 chromosomes instead of the usual 46

Signs and Symptoms

- Eyes that slant downward
- Small ears that may fold over a little at the top
- A small mouth, making the tongue appear to be large
- A short neck
- Small hands and feet
- Weak muscle tone
- Short stature in childhood and adulthood

**** Infants born with Down Syndrome can be mentally delayed. The degree of the delay varies**

What is the cause?

- Down Syndrome is caused by an extra copy of chromosome 21. It is also called Trisomy 21 because there are three copies of this chromosome instead of two (chromosomes are the structure in cells that contains the genes)

Is there any treatment?

- Currently, there is no cure for Down Syndrome.
- Children with Down Syndrome need to be followed by their pediatrician regularly since there are several medical concerns that they may have. These include: heart problems, abnormal thyroid function, neck instability, ear infections and hearing problems
- Children with Down Syndrome benefit from early intervention services to help with motor and learning skills. You can contact the Maryland Infants and Toddlers program listed on the next page

Support Groups/Resources

- Kennedy Krieger Institute
<http://www.kennedykrieger.org>
443-923-9200
- March of Dimes
www.marchofdimes.com
1-410-546-2241
- Maryland State Department Of Education
www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE
410 767-0261
1-800-535-0182
- National Down Syndrome Society
<http://www.ndss.org>
1-800-221-4602
- Office for Genetics and People with Special Health Care Needs
<http://fha.maryland.gov/genetics/bdris.cfm>
1 -800-638-8864
- The Parents' Place Of Maryland
www.ppmmd.org
410- 768-9100
- Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/
410-767-0261 or 1-800-535-0182