



Down Syndrome

One of the most common syndromes associated with intellectual and developmental disabilities is trisomy 21 or Down syndrome. There are a number of health-related conditions that have been shown to have a higher incidence in people with this syndrome.

Conditions shown to have a higher incidence in people with this syndrome:

- ▶ Respiratory infections, especially during the first five years of life
- ▶ Heart defects
- ▶ Leukemia in childhood
- ▶ Hypothyroidism
- ▶ Hearing loss
- ▶ Vision issues including keratoconus and cataracts
- ▶ Sleep disturbances including sleep apnea
- ▶ Dementia, and with an earlier presentation, often around age 50
- ▶ Increased risk of periodontal diseases and tooth anomalies
- ▶ Obesity
- ▶ Increased risk for celiac disease
- ▶ Increased risk for testicular cancer
- ▶ Atlantoaxial instability
- ▶ Increased seizure risk
- ▶ Psychiatric disorders including depression
- ▶ Micro fractures at the thoracolumbar junction that may present in an older person with Down syndrome as sudden refusal to walk

In addition to regular screening, consider additional screening including things like:

- ▶ C-spine x-rays at 3-5 years of age and prior to anesthesia
- ▶ Ophthalmological assessments
- ▶ Auditory assessments
- ▶ Regular dental exams
- ▶ Cardiac evaluations
- ▶ Sleep apnea evaluations
- ▶ Swallowing studies
- ▶ Monitoring for obesity
- ▶ Regular testicular exams
- ▶ Routing thyroid function studies
- ▶ Dementia screening at an earlier age than others

Thanks for your consideration of these suggestions for helping people with Down syndrome navigate through life successfully.

Micro fractures at the thoraco-lumber junction that may present in an older person as sudden refusal to walk.

