



NDSS Home > Information & Resources > Health > Associated Medical Condit...

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Shop

Health Topics

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Associated Conditions
- Atlantoaxial Instability
- Blood Diseases
- Cosmetic Surgery
- Dental Care
- Dental-Periodontal Disease
- Dimethyl Sulfoxide
- DS Clinics and UCEDDs
- Dual Diagnosis
- Ear, Nose, Throat
- Early Intervention
- Endocrine
- Growth Charts
- Healthcare Guidelines
- Healthcare Guidelines - How to Use Them
- Heart
- Interferon and Down Syndrome
- Neurology
- Physical Therapy
- Piracetam
- Sexuality
- Speech
- Thyroid
- Vision & Hearing
- Vitamin Related Therapies
- Your Baby and DS

## Associated Medical Conditions

Children with Down syndrome are at increased risk for certain health problems. Congenital heart defects, increased susceptibility to infection, respiratory problems, obstructed digestive tracts and childhood leukemia occur with greater frequency among children who have Down syndrome. However, advances in medicine have rendered most of these health problems treatable and the majority of people born with Down syndrome today have a life expectancy of approximately 55 years.

Adults with Down syndrome are at increased risk for Alzheimer's disease. Whereas approximately six percent of the general population will develop the disease, the figure is about 25 percent for people with Down syndrome. Many individuals with Down syndrome have the changes in the brain associated with Alzheimer's, but do not necessarily develop the clinical disorder.

Health Programs