Monthly WellTips

October

National Down Syndrome Awareness Month

Down syndrome is named after John Langdon Down, the first physician to identify the syndrome. It is a set of mental and physical symptoms that occur from having an extra copy of Chromosome 21. It’s seen in roughly one out of 800 live births, and the risk of having a child with Down syndrome increases with the age of the mother. After conception a test can be done to detect Down syndrome and allow the parents time to prepare for a child with special needs. Currently there is no cure and symptoms can range from mild to severe. While each individual is different there are some common physical signs and health conditions which can include:

- Flat face, an upward slant to the eye, short neck, abnormally shaped ears and a deep crease in the palm of the hand
- White spots on the iris of the eye
- Poor muscle tone or loose ligaments
- Small hands and feet
- Congenital heart disease
- Hearing, vision and intestinal problems
- Celiac disease
- Thyroid dysfunctions
- Skeletal problems

Children with Down syndrome may be slower to develop, so early intervention is necessary to ensure the child is able to live a long, productive life. Speech and occupational therapy may be beneficial, as well as practicing exercises for fine and gross motor skill development. According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, "Most people with Down syndrome have IQ's that fall in the mild to moderate range of retardation. Some are so mildly affected that they live independently and are gainfully employed."

If you have a child with Down syndrome it may be beneficial for you to join a parent support group. If this is something you are interested in, contact the National Down Syndrome Society at www.ndss.org for more information.

Resources

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
www.nichd.nih.gov

StayWell Online
https://uclivingwell.online.staywell.com

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