

## What is Down Syndrome?

Down syndrome is a genetic condition that occurs in approximately one in every 691 live births.

It affects people of all ages, races and economic levels and is the most frequently occurring chromosomal abnormalities. It occurs when there are three, rather than two, number 21 chromosomes present in every cell of the body. Instead of the usual 46 chromosomes, a person with Down syndrome has 47. It is this additional genetic material that alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with the syndrome. Down syndrome affects over 400,000 people in the United States alone. Recent advances in our understanding of Down syndrome have resulted in dramatic improvements in the life span and potential of those who are affected.