

Health Care Information for Families of Children with Down Syndrome

Child's Age: The Prenatal Period (the time before birth)

Consider testing as desired

Prenatal testing for genetic conditions is recommended for families who wish information to help them make decisions about a pregnancy. This testing should be done only after information about the tests has been discussed between the doctor and the family, and the family understands the risks and benefits of the testing.

Counseling

If Down syndrome (trisomy 21) or any other chromosome change that causes Down syndrome is found by prenatal testing, the family should receive counseling to explain the issues and provide support for the family.

Prenatal heart testing

Because there is a high risk of heart problems at birth in Down syndrome, echocardiography (an ultrasound picture of the heart) done during the pregnancy can provide information that may be useful for the remainder of the pregnancy and for the delivery. This information may help with decisions such as where to deliver the baby and the medical services needed late in pregnancy or at delivery.