



Health and Community Services

Having Downs syndrome and keeping well



An **Easy Read** leaflet about how people who have Downs syndrome can stay healthy for longer.

Speech and Language Therapy Department
Adult Learning Disability Team

About Downs syndrome and learning disabilities



When you have Downs syndrome it is important to keep healthy.



When you have Downs syndrome you might have other disabilities and support needs as well.



If you have Downs syndrome you will also have a learning disability.

A learning disability is when you have difficulty understanding information.



This means you might need help and support with some everyday tasks.



Or you might be very independent and have a job.



Just like everyone you will have different needs.

Downs syndrome and Autism



You might have Autism.

Autism does not go away you have it your whole life.



If you have Autism you might find it hard to understand what others are thinking or feeling.

You might get very anxious.



You might not like:

some smells, touch, tastes,
sounds or bright lights



You might have a special skill
or interest and be really good
at something.



Autism is different for
everyone.

Downs Syndrome and communication



Communication is talking,
signing and listening.

We all communicate every day
in our own way.



You might need support with your speaking and making sure people understand you.



You might use Makaton sign language and communication picture boards.



You might need help seeing and hearing.

You will need to have your eyes and hearing checked every year.



You might need to wear glasses to help you see.

You might need to have hearing aids to help you hear well.

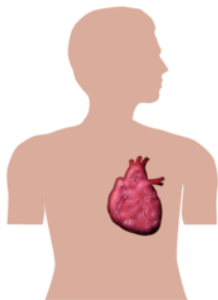
Downs syndrome and other health conditions



It is important that you have a health check every year.

This is because when you have Downs syndrome there are some health problems that you might get.

Heart problems



Some people with Downs syndrome are born with a heart problem.



You do not need to worry.

Your doctor will tell you how to keep your heart healthy.

Dementia



From the age of 30 some people with Down's syndrome might slowly start to show signs of dementia.



Dementia is the word given to changes in your memory, thinking, language and behaviour.



Dementia is caused by diseases that damage your brain.

The most common type of dementia is caused by Alzheimer's disease.



You might forget things, get confused and find it harder to do your normal activities.



There might be medicines that can help.

Your doctor can talk to you about these.

Keeping well



There are things you can do to stay well.



You might put on weight easily.



This means it is good for you to choose healthier foods most of the time.

You might need to eat a little bit less to stay a healthy weight.



Do not drink too much alcohol

Do not smoke.



Keep active and get lots of exercise.



Look after your hearing.

Sleep well.



Be social and see family and friends.



Learn new things and do activities you enjoy.



You are more likely to become very unwell if you catch an infection or virus like the flu.

You can choose to get the vaccines to protect you every year.

For more information



You can talk to your doctor or nurse.



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