

'DOWNS SYNDROME' WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN



The new parents stare at the baby with awe. The tiny baby in the crib seems to be a bundle of despair. What was it the doctors said? This baby will never be the child we were dreaming about. She has some terrible disease called Down's Syndrome.... She won't be NORMAL, she will be RETARDED & slow to learn. she may be an IDIOT... what a shattering experience.

Very often, this is the first impact we give to the parents when a baby is born with Down's Syndrome, these are the cruel words we bombard them with, not realizing the terrible impact they create. And 'we' means all of us, doctors, nurses, friends, neighbours, relatives, etc., etc. Unfortunately, neither do we have the knowledge and awareness about Down's syndrome, nor are we sensitive to the feelings of the awe-stricken parents.

So, let us look at the real scenario, which is not that awful at all! This tiny baby in the crib is just as cute and just as promising as any other baby. Only thing is that she has an extra chromosome 21 in her cells, that gives her 47 chromosomes to a cell. This causes some differences in her appearance and her system too.



An enviable grin

The appearance though characteristic, maybe very sweet too. A very loveable baby with a sweet smile and very supple limbs is the common look. One cannot resist loving this baby.

Their brain development may be somewhat different, which often make them slow learners, but the good part is that most often their intelligence is just mildly deficient. Though early development may be slow, they do eventually learn to sit, stand, walk and run, as any other child. So, with talking.



Look what I can do!

What the doctor should alert the parents about is the possible medical problems that may be associated, because timely detection and early management can save a lot of complications. So, you may need to get some blood tests, X-rays, Echo-cardiography etc. done as per your doctor's advice. Be on the alert for constipation, cough and cold, difficult breathing, and consult your doctor regularly.

Early intervention is very important for these babies' proper development. Physiotherapy, play and behavior therapy, speech therapy and special education programs are all very essential to bring out the best in a child with Downs Syndrome.

What is the best that a child with Downs Syndrome can achieve? Most often they can live an independent life, with just a little support. They can often complete school education and train in various skills including fine arts and sports. Their special keenness in music and suppleness of limbs give them an extra edge.



Look at my supple joints

As a baby they are easy to handle and least fussy. They grow into cheerful, sociable kids, easy to mix and make friends easily. Even as adults they remain simple, soft and gentle... a trait so rare in today's world.

So, parents, be proud you have a child with that extra gene. Though a Downs, he will not let you down if you take proper care of him. And he deserves that extra care and affection too.



Life IS Amusing!