

Health Care for Adults With Down Syndrome

Age									
Usual preventive medicine care*									
Cardiology† auscultation									
Audiologic evaluation									
Ophthalmology referral									
Thyroid (TSH)									
Neurologic examination‡									
Assess biannual dental examination									
Reproductive health§ and testicular examination									
Development, depression, stress									
Nutrition and obesity									
Family and parent group information									
Estate planning									
Living arrangements and employment									

*--Common medical problems, as well as special medical problems, may affect the person with Down syndrome. It cannot be assumed that a problem is due solely to the condition of Down syndrome.

†--Examine by auscultation for mitral valve prolapse and aortic regurgitation. If suspected, obtain an echocardiogram. Start endocarditis prophylaxis as indicated by American Heart Association guidelines.

‡--To assess for spinal cord compression from atlantoaxial instability, test gait, tone, Babinski responses, deep tendon reflexes and clonus. Assess for neck pain, torticollis, gait disturbances, spasticity and weakness. Advise the family or caregiver of symptoms to report to the physician.

§--Assess need for contraception. Obtain Papanicolaou smears and mammograms as indicated by standard guidelines. Consider pelvic ultrasonography or examination under anesthesia if the patient refuses a bimanual examination. Perform testicular examination.

||--A periodic assessment should be performed using a team approach involving occupational, physical and speech therapists, as indicated. If there are areas of loss of function, assess for thyroid function, depression, stress, Alzheimer's disease, sensory deficits, sleep patterns suggestive of sleep apnea, and common medical conditions with an unusual presentation. Do not assume Alzheimer's disease. Include information about supportive employment and self-advocacy for adults. Refer parents or caregivers to a parent advocacy group.