

## **What is Down Syndrome – By Dr Anupsinh Chhastiya, Psychiatrist, Vadodara.**

Down syndrome is not an illness or disease to be prevented but instead, an unexplained error in replicating DNA, genes, and chromosomes at the earliest stages of embryo development. Down syndrome is diagnosed while the fetus is still in the uterus. It is the most common chromosomal condition. More than 1 million cases per year get reported in India. Only 1% of all cases of Down syndrome have a hereditary component. Maternal age is the only factor that has been linked to an increased chance of having a baby with Down syndrome. For couples who have a child with Down syndrome, there is increased risk to have a second child with Down syndrome. Women with Down syndrome are capable of becoming pregnant and are at increased risk of having another child with Down syndrome. There is an increased risk of infant death in the first year of life because of congenital heart disease (failure of the heart to develop normally) and respiratory infections. Congenital heart disease may affect up to 50% of patients. The baby with Down syndrome has a hallmark appearance. The way the genes make the child look, can be markedly different for each patient. There is decreased mental function and the IQ may range from mild disability (50 to 70) to moderate (35 to 50). Down's syndrome is the commonest genetic cause of intellectual disabilities. Treatment can help, but this condition can't be cured. Positive reinforcement can help in modification of their behavior & productivity of life.