

NDSS Position Statement on Prenatal Testing

The National Down Syndrome Society believes all expectant parents should be informed as to the purpose of the various screening and diagnostic prenatal tests and given information on the risks, limitations and expense of the tests, the manner in which these tests will be performed, and when during the gestational period the results will be available.

Prenatal testing for Down syndrome should be made available to any pregnant woman who wishes to receive the tests, regardless of the woman's age, reproductive history or disability status. Knowing in advance either the risk or diagnosis of Down syndrome can help parents educate, inform and prepare themselves for all issues regarding this genetic condition.

However, the decision whether to undergo prenatal testing must be solely that of the pregnant woman. All forms of prenatal testing for Down syndrome should remain strictly confidential and voluntary.

All women, regardless of age, reproductive history or disability status, must be given the absolute right to continue a pregnancy after prenatal diagnosis. They should never be subjected to unwanted pressure from health care professionals or others concerning this decision.

Above all, the National Down Syndrome Society strongly believes that policymakers, health care professionals and society as a whole have a responsibility to do everything possible to ensure that people with Down syndrome have the opportunity to lead productive, independent lives and realize their life aspirations.