Facts

• Alzheimer’s Disease is one of several types of dementia
• Alzheimer’s disease is caused by a build up of Amyloid Plaques and Neurofibrillary Tangles in the brain
• People with Down syndrome have extra copies of the 21st chromosome where Amyloid Plaques are created
• Alzheimer’s disease is the most common dementia seen in people with Down syndrome

Risks

• It is not inevitable that a person with Down syndrome will develop Alzheimer’s disease
  
  However
  
  • The average of diagnosis in people with Down syndrome is 55.
  • People younger than 40 are rarely seen with Alzheimer’s disease
  • 30% of people with Down syndrome in their 50s have an Alzheimer’s diagnosis
  • 50% of people with Down syndrome in their 60s have an Alzheimer’s diagnosis
  • The risk increases with advancing age

Take Action:
What Can be Done if changes are seen?

• Alzheimer’s in people with Down syndrome can only be diagnosed by ruling out all other possibilities.
• Seek a thorough medical exam (differential diagnosis)
• Conditions to explore
  — Sleep Apnea
  — Thyroid disease
  — Depression
  — Vision/Hearing changes
  — Vitamin B-12 deficiency
  — Celiac disease
  — Heart disease
  — Seizure disorder
  — Medication side effects and interactions
  — Metabolic diseases: Kidney, Diabetes, Calcium abnormality
  — Atlantoaxial instability
Resources

- Alzheimer’s Disease & Down Syndrome A Practical Guidebook for Caregivers
  www.ndss.org/about-down-syndrome/publications/

- NTG & NDSS Caregiver News
  www.the-ntg.org/caregiver-newsletter-archive

- The Guide to Good Health for Teens & Adults with Down syndrome,
  Brian Chicoine, M.D., Dennis McGuire, Ph.D.

- Alzheimer’s Disease in People with Down Syndrome

- Down Syndrome and Alzheimer’s Disease
  www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia/types-of-dementia/down-syndrome