



World
Down
Syndrome
Day 2026

Key messages



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WDSD website:



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Together Against Loneliness

Key messages



About World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day is on 21 March every year. It is an official part of the United Nations calendar!



World Down Syndrome Day was created to make sure people with Down syndrome have the same freedoms and opportunities as everybody else.

So, on World Down Syndrome Day, we share key messages to help make the world a better place for people with Down syndrome.



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About Down syndrome



Around 1 in every 800 babies will be born with Down syndrome.

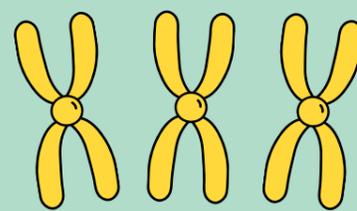
This is a condition in which a person has an extra chromosome in the cells that make up their body.

The extra chromosome causes differences in how the body and brain develop.

Each person with Down syndrome is different.

Each has their own individual identity, interests, likes and dislikes, gifts and talents, just like everyone else.

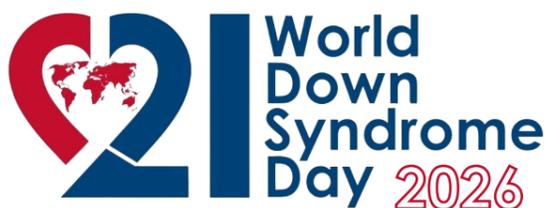
Having Down syndrome is just one part of who we are!



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About the words we use

The words we use are important...



Always use person-first language - say "A person who has Down syndrome".



Do not say "A Down's person".



Down syndrome is a condition or a syndrome. People "have" Down syndrome.



Down syndrome is not a disease. People do not "suffer from" it and are not "afflicted by" it.



People with Down syndrome may have an intellectual and developmental disability.



Do not say mentally handicapped, backward or retarded.



People who do not have Down syndrome may be described as "typically developing" or "typical".



Do not say "normal" as that suggests we are abnormal.

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Together Against Loneliness



Together Against Loneliness

Studies have found that people with intellectual disabilities are more likely to be lonely than people without disabilities.

Loneliness is a serious problem. It is not just a sad feeling. It is bad for our health and happiness.

A study found that loneliness can be as bad for our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Loneliness happens when people are not supported to build and maintain connections with other people.



Being present is not the same as being included.

To stop loneliness, every person needs:



To be truly included in schools, jobs, and community life. Not just "being there," but taking part.



To feel welcome and valued, to be invited to join in, and to be safe from stigma.



To have strong, supportive, and meaningful relationships with friends, family, and partners.

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World Down Syndrome Day 2026

Who are we?

World Down Syndrome Day is a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012.

On **21 March** each year we create a single global voice advocating for the rights, inclusion and well being of people with Down syndrome.

Visit worlddownsyndromeday.org to learn more.

The World Down Syndrome Day website and associated activities are coordinated by **Down Syndrome International** in collaboration with the **National Down Syndrome Society** and the **Down's Syndrome Association**.



Visit worlddownsyndromeday.org to learn more.



Visit ds-int.org



Visit ndss.org



Visit downs-syndrome.org.uk



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