Caring for Your Baby with Down Syndrome

What is Down syndrome?
It is a genetic condition that causes children to have more health problems and learning difficulties than other children. Finding out that your baby has Down syndrome can be stressful and confusing. Talk with your baby’s doctor to find out more about Down syndrome and what it means for your family. Make sure that you take time to enjoy your new baby who, in most ways, will be just like any other baby.

Can I breastfeed my baby?
Yes, babies with Down syndrome can breastfeed like other babies, and breastfeeding is recommended. Some babies with Down syndrome may have more trouble feeding when they are very little. Getting help from a nurse or breastfeeding specialist in the hospital can help.

Will my child be able to go to school?
Yes, enrolling in early intervention programs as soon as possible will help your child reach his or her potential. Most children with Down syndrome can go to school. Many can be in the same classroom as other children their own age. Schools offer extra help to children with learning difficulties.

How do I care for my baby?
Ask your doctor when you should bring your baby in for visits. Ask lots of questions to make sure you understand what is recommended and why. Talk with your doctor if you have a concern about your baby. The first year of life is very important for growth and making sure that your baby is as healthy as possible.

Where can I get more information?
Organizations:
Brighter Tomorrows
http://www.brightertomorrows.org
D.A.D.S. (Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome)
http://www.dadsnational.org
Medline Plus: Down syndrome
National Down Syndrome Congress
http://www.ndsccenter.org
National Down Syndrome Society
http://www.ndss.org

Books:
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Down syndrome can be caused by one of three types of abnormal cell division involving chromosome 21. Some parents have a greater risk of having a baby with Down syndrome. The risk factors include: Maternal Age. As a woman’s eggs age, there is a higher risk of the chromosomes dividing incorrectly. Therefore the risk of Down syndrome increases with a woman’s age. Mother’s age. Chances of having a child with Down syndrome. 20. 1 in 1,600. If some or all of the characteristic Down syndrome features are present, the health care provider will order a chromosomal karyotype test to be done. If there is an extra chromosome 21 present, the diagnosis is Down syndrome. What are the reasons to test or not test?