

Maternal Age and Down Syndrome

Down syndrome is a common genetic birth defect that is characterized by the presence of an additional copy of the chromosome 21. It is also commonly referred to as Trisomy 21. In Florida, from 2010-2014, Down syndrome occurred in 13.5 cases per 10,000 live births.

Individuals with Down syndrome often have a myriad of comorbidities, including mild to severe intellectual disabilities. Children diagnosed with Down syndrome also have a high likelihood of being born with a congenital heart defect.

A known risk factor for Down syndrome is increasing maternal age. As seen in Figure 4, women who are 35 to 39 years old are approximately 4.5 times more likely to have a child with Down syndrome compared with women in the 25 to 29 age group. This risk increases to 15.7 for mothers age 40 years or older.

Figure 4: Prevalence of Down Syndrome by Mother's Age Group, Florida, 2010-2014

