

Work and Activity Considerations for People with Down Syndrome [COVID-19]

March 2020 | Brian Chicoine, MD - Medical Director, Adult Down Syndrome Center

UPDATED MARCH 16, 2020: The CDC recommends that people at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 maintain distance from others, avoid crowds as much as possible, and stay home as much as possible during the COVID-19 outbreak. Many people with Down syndrome are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 for a number of reasons. These include **immune deficiency related to Down syndrome and higher frequency of co-occurring conditions associated with higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19. We recommend that people with Down syndrome stay home from work and activities and/or work from home if possible.**

The information below was written on March 14, 2020. For the most up-to-date information, please see the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at [this link](#).

We have received several questions about recommendations on whether people with Down syndrome should work or participate in community activities in light of the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

As information is being shared rapidly, we recommend that you check the [website of the CDC](#) for the most up-to-date recommendations. Information about COVID-19 in people with Down syndrome can be found at: www.lumindidsc.org/t21covid. The LuMind IDSC Foundation - in collaboration with other Down syndrome organizations, including the Adult Down Syndrome Center - is gathering and sharing information about COVID-19 specific to people with Down syndrome (as it becomes available).

Based on current information, we know the following:

1. We should stay home if we are sick or likely sick *or* a family member is sick or likely sick with COVID-19. To prevent the spread of illness, refrain from going to work, participating in activities, or being in community settings. This is true for people with and without Down syndrome.
2. People with Down syndrome are more susceptible to respiratory infections. COVID-19 is a respiratory infection. Although we do not have data on COVID-19 in people with Down syndrome, this correlation suggests that using an "overabundance of caution" (i.e. being extra cautious) is reasonable.

3. People with Down syndrome are at a higher risk for certain medical conditions. The CDC has stated that older adults and people with conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease are at higher risk of getting sicker with COVID-19. Again, although we do not have data on COVID-19 in people with Down syndrome, the CDC's information suggests that many people with Down syndrome are at a higher risk. During an outbreak in your community, the CDC recommends that those who are at high risk "stay home as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed."

As I wrote in our [article on travel considerations](#), if you and your family are healthy, deciding whether to go to work or participate in community activities is a personal decision. Several questions that may be helpful to consider include:

- Based on my health history, is my risk greater?
- What type of job do I have or what type of activity do I participate in? Will I be exposed to a large number of people? Will I need to be in close proximity to others?
- What are the potential negative implications of staying home? How do they compare to my risk of infection?

We appreciate that this is a challenging decision given the physical and mental health benefits of jobs and activities. If you choose not to go to work or participate in activities, consider ways to stay engaged and active at home. FaceTime? Puzzles and games? Exercise videos? Or you might use the extra time to watch all our [health education videos](#)! We would love to hear your ideas. Please share them on our [Facebook post](#) or submit them using our [Contact Us form](#).

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