

Let's talk about
GETTING OLDER



**A booklet about getting
older for adults who have
a learning disability**



Down's Syndrome Scotland
helping people realise their potential

This booklet will help you to think about the things that might happen to you as you get older, and how to stay healthy.

**A photo of
me when I
was younger**

**A photo
of me now**

About me:

Getting OLDER

Here are some of the things that might happen to your body as you get older.



Develop grey hair and wrinkles.



Have difficulty walking, taking longer to do things.



Need to wear glasses or a hearing aid



Find it harder to remember things

GOOD THINGS about getting older

Here are some of the good things that may happen to you as you get older:



Not having to get up early every day.



More time to do things you like.



Not having to
go to work.

Cheaper
entrance to
the cinema
or theatre.

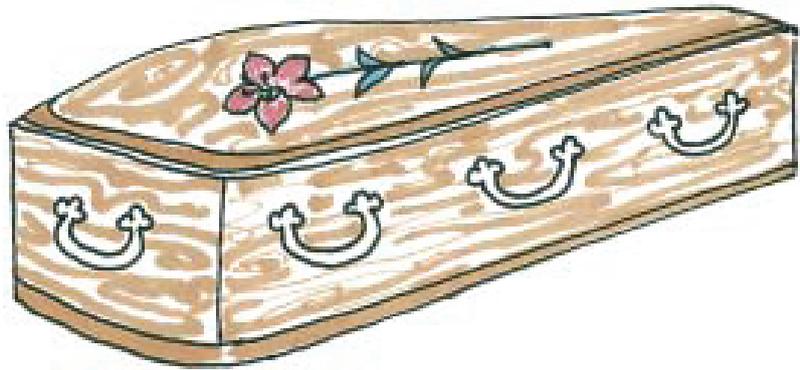


HARD THINGS about getting older

Some things will change as you get older.
Some might be **HARD** to cope with.

People dying.

Losing your
parents, family
members and
friends.



Becoming ill.



Becoming forgetful.



Moving house.



Finding it harder to look after yourself.

EYES, MOUTH...

Keeping your eyes healthy

You need to get your eyes checked every 2 years at the Opticians.



You may need to wear glasses.

Keeping your teeth and mouth healthy



You need to get your teeth and mouth checked every 6 months at the Dentist, even if you wear false teeth.

...EARS AND FEET

Keeping your ears healthy and hearing good

Do you find it hard to hear things? You should tell your Doctor or Nurse, you may need your ears checked.



You may need a hearing aid.

Keeping your feet healthy

Do your feet hurt?

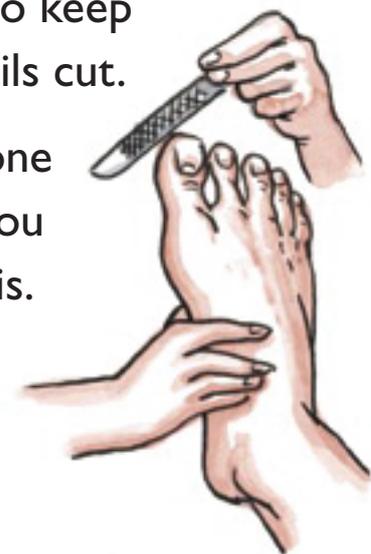


Shoes that don't fit can make your feet hurt.

If your feet hurt you should tell your Doctor or Nurse who may send you to see the Chiropodist.

You need to keep your toenails cut.

Ask someone to help if you can't do this.



STAYING FIT...

Keeping your heart healthy

Your heart needs to pump blood around your body.

If your heart is not working well you may get out of breath quickly.

Your feet and fingers may feel cold.



You need to get your blood pressure checked by your Doctor or Nurse.

STAYING HEALTHY

Keeping your weight healthy

If you are overweight your heart has to work harder.
Being underweight can also make you ill.



Your Doctor or Nurse will tell you how much
you should weigh.

Keeping fit and healthy into old age



As you get older you may
find it harder to walk and
climb stairs. Older people
sometimes fall.

If you have problems
getting about, tell
your Doctor or Nurse.

SLEEPING

As you get older you may not sleep so well at night.



You may find it hard to go to sleep. You may wake up in the middle of the night. If this keeps happening tell your Doctor or Nurse.

GOING TO THE TOILET



**If you are peeing
or pooing too much
tell your Doctor
or Nurse.**

**If you find it hard to
pee or poo tell your
Doctor or Nurse.**



DO YOU HAVE PAIN?

As people get older they may get more aches and pains. This is when a part of your body hurts.



Tell someone if you have pain.



You may need to see your
Doctor or Nurse.

TAKING TABLETS

If you take tablets or medicine you should see your Doctor every few months to talk about it.



If you think that your tablets or medicine are making you feel ill tell your Doctor straight away.

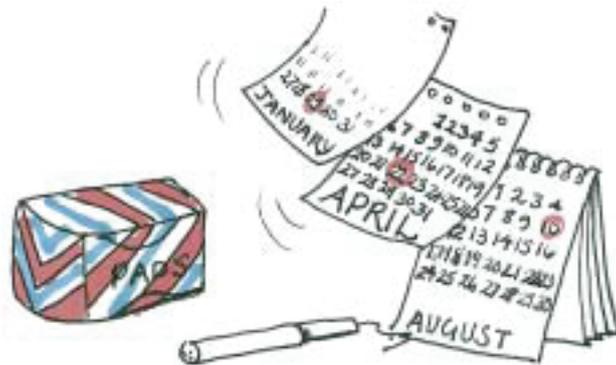
The MENOPAUSE

The menopause may also be called ‘the change’.

The menopause happens to all women. It usually starts after the age of 45 years, but some women experience the symptoms earlier than that.

The changes to your body include...

Periods happen less often and eventually stop altogether.



A woman's shape will change and her waist will get thicker.



Women may experience changes in mood. This can mean that they may feel happy some of the time. At other times they may feel sad or bad tempered.



Women have 'hot flushes'.

This is when their body feels very hot.

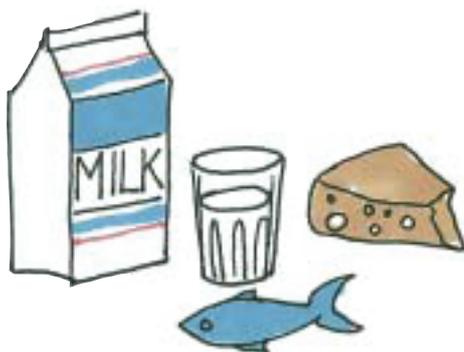
They may also feel sweaty or shivery.

No-one else can tell that this is happening.

A woman may need to fan herself to keep cool.

Flushes can last for a few minutes or up to an hour. They may occur several times each day.

Flushes may also happen at night.



Women need to have enough calcium to make sure that their bones stay strong. Some women have Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) – ask your GP about things that might help.

What I can do to stay HEALTHY AND FIT

Ways to keep fit and healthy:

Exercise and keep active.



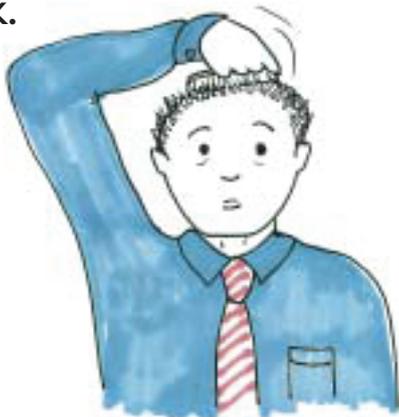
Eating healthy foods.



Keep doing things for
yourself.



Taking care of how you
look.



Learn new things.



The FUTURE

Think about...

Where you want to live.



Who you want to live with.



What type of help you might need.



How you would like to spend your time.



QUIZ

How do you keep fit and healthy? Tick the correct answers

To keep fit, what do I need to do?

Sit and watch TV



Go for a walk every day



Go swimming



To have a healthy diet, what do I need to eat?

Healthy food



Fish and chips



Drink fizzy drinks



If I have problems sleeping, what should I do?

Do exercise during the day



Watch TV in bed



Talk to my GP



If I have problems seeing, what should I do?

Go to the opticians



Tell someone



Ignore it



ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK

Why do you need an annual health check?

People with Down's syndrome need to see the doctor every year because:

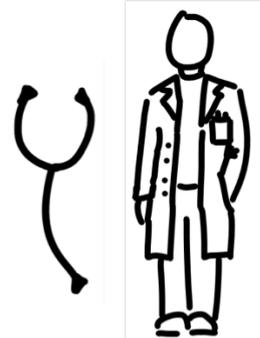
- It is important to stay fit and healthy so you can continue to do the things you enjoy
- A health check will make sure you stay well
- Sometimes it is harder for people with Down's syndrome to get to the doctors
- People with Down's syndrome are more likely to have a health problem



What will happen when you go for your annual health check?

Your doctor will talk to you and make sure you are fit and healthy. The doctor might ask you about:

- What food you eat
- How much you exercise
- Your hearing and If you wear glasses
- What medicine you are taking



Answer the questions on the next page before you visit the doctor, this will help you answer their questions.

The doctor may take your blood pressure
They might take some blood using a needle. If you are unsure about this, please talk to your doctor or nurse.

Information for parents/carers/health professionals

For more information about the annual health check, please refer to:

Downs Syndrome Medical Interest Group: www.dsmig.org.uk

Royal College General Practitioners 'Step by Step Guide for GP Practices: Annual health checks for people with a Learning Disability' Dr Matt Houghton and the RCGP Learning Disabilities Group: www.rcgp.org.uk/learningdisabilities/~/_media/Files/CIRC/CIRC-76-80/CIRCA%20StepbyStepGuideforPracticesOctober%2010.ashx

Down's Syndrome Scotland Family Support Service: www.dsscotland.org.uk

ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK

Before you go to your GP for your annual health check, think about the answers to these questions:



What food do you eat most?



How much do you exercise?



Do you have any problems seeing or hearing?



Do you take any medicine?



Do you have any pain, if so where?



Are you sleeping ok?



Have you be feeling okay? Have you been unhappy?



For woman: Are you having menopause symptoms?



For men: are you going to the toilet more?

This workbook is in easy read format. It is advisable that family/ carers/friends read the book and do the exercises with the person.

Down's Syndrome Scotland provides support to families, carers and professionals who care for an adult with Down's syndrome. If you would like to access further support please call the Family Support Service on 0131 313 4225. For further information visit www.dsscotland.org.uk



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