

TOMORROW  
STARTS  
TODAY.

Physical and Mental Health Concerns in Adolescents and Adults with Down Syndrome  
National Association for Down Syndrome 2018 CONFERENCE *“Creating Lifelong Learners”*

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# Adult Down Syndrome Center



TOMORROW STARTS TODAY.

Leo Foley  
1907-1947



# Life Expectancy

- Life expectancy:
  - 1907: 9 years
  - 1984: 28 years
  - Today: 60 years
- One of the oldest well-documented individuals with Down syndrome, 83 years old at death
  - Chicoine, B. & McGuire, D. (1997) Longevity of a woman with Down syndrome: a case study. *Mental Retardation* 35(6):477-9.



# The Interaction Between Physical and Mental Health

- Any and all behavior change should be viewed as a possible communication tool
- Promoting one promotes the other



# Pain

- Pain tolerance/reduced responsiveness
- Pain perception
  - Delayed
  - Localization
- 1. Martínez-Cué, Carmen; Baamonde, Carmela. A murine model for Down syndrome shows reduced responsiveness to pain. *NeuroReport*, Vol 10, Issue 5, April 1999, 1119-1122.  
2. Hennequin, M et al. Pain expression and stimulus localization in individuals with Down's syndrome. *The Lancet*, Volume 356, Issue 9245, Dec 2000, 1882 – 1887.

# More Common Health Conditions

- Hearing impairment
- Vision impairment, keratoconus, cataracts
- Dysphagia (swallowing)
- Sleep apnea
- Infections
  - Skin
  - Lung/Respiratory

# More Common Health Conditions Continued

- Gastrointestinal
  - Gastroesophageal reflux
  - Celiac
  - Constipation
  - Hernias
- Urinary
  - Retention
  - Undescended testicle
- Orthopedics
  - Atlanto-axial instability
  - Osteoarthritis



# More common, continued

- Cancer
  - Leukemia
  - Testicular cancer
- Autoimmune

# Mental Health and Neurologic

- Depression
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Alzheimer's disease
- Autism
- Regression

# Conditions that are Less Common

- Hypertension
- Atherosclerotic disease
- Cancer, solid tumors

# 40-year-old man

- Presents to Emergency Department with chest pain
- Low incidence of atherosclerotic disease
- High incidence of gastroesophageal reflux
- Eating too fast

# 30-year-old woman

- Losing skills
- Wide differential of causes
  - Sleep apnea
  - Hypothyroidism
  - Depression
- Alzheimer's disease RARE before age 40 years

# 15-year-old girl

- Recurrent diarrhea
- Differential
  - Infection
  - Celiac
  - Lactose intolerance
  - Inflammatory bowel (Crohn's or Ulcerative Colitis)
  - Medication side effects
  - Overeating

# 18-year-old man

- Not doing as well at school
- Unhappy
- Regression
  
- Putting head on desk
  
- 50-year-old woman

# 38-year-old woman

- Agitation
- Don't forget pain
- Wide variety of causes



# Resources

**Web site** – <https://www.advocatehealth.com/health-services/adult-down-syndrome-center/> (or search for “Adult Down Syndrome Center)

**Facebook** – <https://www.facebook.com/adultdownsyndromecenter>

## Contact

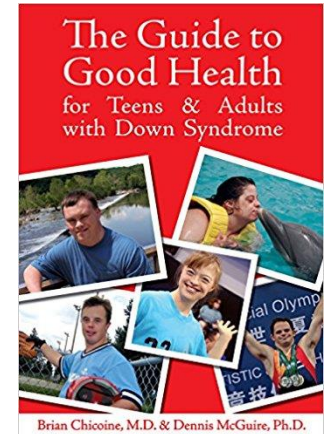
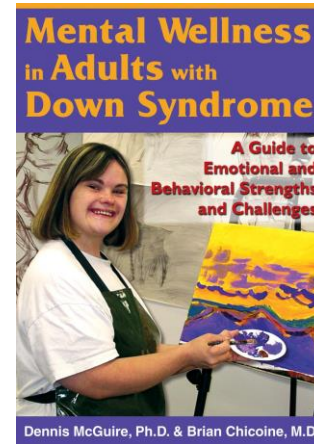
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# Resources

- Author
  - **Mental Wellness in Adults with Down Syndrome: A Guide to Emotional and Behavioral Strengths and Challenges**  
*Dennis McGuire, PhD & Brian Chicoine, MD*
  - **The Guide to Good Health for Teens & Adults with Down Syndrome**  
*Brian Chicoine, MD & Dennis McGuire, PhD*



Questions?

Discussion