



Down Syndrome
Australia



Prenatal Testing



Position Paper

January 2025

What is this paper about?



This paper explains what Down Syndrome Australia says about **prenatal tests**.

Prenatal tests are when women have tests to see if their unborn baby has a disability, such as Down syndrome.



Parents need correct information and good support when they decide about prenatal testing.

This paper explains

- why it is important
- what the government needs to do.



The information is written in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



You can ask someone to help to read this paper.

This can be your family, a friend or support person.

Why do things need to change when it comes to prenatal testing?



There are different tests that can show if an unborn baby might have a disability. Some are blood tests. There are also other kinds of tests such as ultrasounds.

It is important for parents to get the right information about the testing.

Sometimes families want to have tests so they can get the best care before the baby is born.



Sometimes they want to have tests to decide whether to have the baby or not. This is a right for all pregnant women.

Down Syndrome Australia is worried that parents are getting **unbalanced** information about Down syndrome. This means untrue, out of date and no positive information.



Some families say they only got information that said Down syndrome is bad. They said this would make some people not want to have the baby.

There are already some **guidelines** about prenatal testing.



This is advice for doctors and other health professionals about what information and support parents should get.

But some doctors do not follow the advice.



What needs to change?

The government needs to change the prenatal testing system.

DSA made this list of what needs to change:

Parents need balanced information that:

- is correct and up to date
- includes the good things about having a baby with Down syndrome.

This will help them decide whether to have tests. It can help them decide about having a baby with Down syndrome.



Parents should be able to get help to understand the information.

They should get **counselling** if they find out their unborn baby has a disability. This is a professional person to talk with.



They should be put in touch with a Down Syndrome Association.

The association can give them information and put them in touch with other families of children with Down syndrome.





Doctors and other health professionals must follow the guidelines about prenatal testing.



The government should make sure all health professionals get training so they can give parents the best information and support.

The government must work with people with Down syndrome and their organisations to run a **public awareness campaign**.



This is information, such as adverts, to make sure the community has true and positive information about Down syndrome.

The government needs to keep asking parents what they think about the prenatal testing system.



They must make sure there are people who will work together to make the system better.

Would you like more information?



Contact Down Syndrome Australia
1300 344 954

Email:
info@downsyndrome.org.au