

# TRISOMY 13

Trisomy 13 happens when cells of the body have an extra copy of chromosome 13. Instead of the typical 46 chromosomes, a child with Trisomy 13 has 47. This happens during cell division and leads to problems with the child's health and growth. It occurs in approximately 1 in 5,000 live births. Most cases (up to 80%) are full Trisomy 13, where all cells have an extra chromosome. Either the egg or sperm received an extra chromosome as it was formed. Some cases are translocation Trisomy 13, where a piece of a chromosome gets stuck on another chromosome. Still other cases are mosaic Trisomy 13, where some cells have 46 chromosomes and some cells have the extra copy.

There are many possible birth defects with Trisomy 13. The most serious are issues with the brain and heart. Cleft lips and palates are common, as are issues with development of the eyes. Many children die within the first month of life and most die within the first year. It is important to note, however, that there are longer-term survivors. While there is a recognizable pattern of physical features with Trisomy 13 babies, there is also a wide range of severity.

Trisomy 13 can happen to parents of any age. There is nothing that you did to cause your child to have Trisomy 13. Nor is there anything you could have done to prevent it.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Virginia Dept. of Health. [http://www.vahealth.org/genetics/Trisomy\\_13.pdf](http://www.vahealth.org/genetics/Trisomy_13.pdf)  
SOFT. <http://www.trisomy.org/trisomy13.php>

## ▲ MOTHER'S LETTER

Your baby has been diagnosed with Trisomy 13. I understand the desperation you feel; how you may feel trapped as hopes and dreams are crashing around you. Take a deep breath and know that you are not alone. Many mothers have been where you are. This devastating news does not change the love a mother has for her child. I encourage you to take time to sort out your emotions. Take time to educate yourself. Take time to realize that some of these children do survive for a time. Take time to realize that you are strong. Take time to realize that you can follow through with God's plan and carry your child to term. Take time to consider your long-term emotional well-being; abortion is not the easy way out that it may appear to be.

Prenatal tests found my baby had Trisomy 13 also. I carried him to term in September 2006. He lived for three hours, knew nothing but love and did not suffer. My family and I got to see him, hold him, and kiss him. He will always be an important part of our family. Our story is on the [livingwithtrisomy13](http://www.livingwithtrisomy13.org) link below, along with many others.

Under pressure, your faith life is forced into the open and shows its true colors (*James 1:3*). I pray that you find the right path for you and your family. There is no one right answer. I found my answer in the Lord's Prayer "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (*Matthew 6:10*). Feel free to call or email me if you want to talk. May God grant you peace and comfort.



Julie Sexton  
Starkville, MS, (662) 465-7400  
[sexton88@bellsouth.net](mailto:sexton88@bellsouth.net)

*Find others. Read stories. Share joys  
and fears. Live without regret.*

<http://www.livingwithtrisomy13.org>

## WHAT I KNOW...

- God knows all of our days before we live even one. *Psalms 139:13-16.*
- Human life is so valuable that God exchanged his son's life for our eternal security. *John 3:16*
- God has a plan to prosper you. *Romans 8:28*