Trisomy 18, also known as Edwards syndrome, is a genetic condition caused by an extra chromosome 18. Babies with trisomy 18 generally have many complex medical complications, including heart defects, growth restriction, a small abnormally shaped head, and clenched fingers with overlapping fingers.

Because of the severity of medical complications associated with trisomy 18, only about 50% of babies with trisomy 18 will survive to delivery. About 5-10% of babies with trisomy 18 will live past the first year of life, with a much smaller percentage surviving to adulthood. All of these individuals will have severe intellectual disability, and will have significant medical issues that will require full-time caregiving.

Finding out your pregnancy has trisomy 18 can be very difficult. Determining what to do next can be even more challenging. Some people who know that their pregnancy has trisomy 18 would choose to carry the pregnancy to term, and use the information to be prepared for the baby’s arrival. Others would choose to terminate (or abort) a pregnancy that has many significant medical complications.

There is no right or wrong answer; only the answer that is right for you and your family. GSF aims to provide you with the information you need to make that difficult decision, and are here to support you in any way that we can.
Find more information about trisomy 18 at the Trisomy 18 Foundation’s web site.

Click here to learn more about scheduling a genetic counseling appointment for pregnancy-related questions.

Click here to learn more about scheduling a genetic counseling appointment for infertility or preconception questions.

Click here to learn more about scheduling a genetic counseling appointment for questions about pediatric or adult genetic conditions.

**Related Articles**

- **Down Syndrome**
  Down syndrome, also known as trisomy 21, is a genetic condition caused by an extra copy of the 21st chromosome. Each individual with Down syndrome is unique. Individuals with Down syndrome have variable health issues, including developmental delays and some degree of intellectual disability. What is life like for people...

- **Trisomy 13 (Patau Syndrome)**
  Trisomy 13, also known as Patau syndrome, is a genetic condition caused by an extra chromosome 13. Babies with trisomy 13 generally have many complex medical complications, including heart defects, brain and spinal cord abnormalities, very small or poorly developed eyes, cleft lip and/or cleft palate, and low muscle tone...

- **Open Neural Tube Defects**
  Open neural tube defects (ONTDs), which includes spina bifida and anencephaly, is a range of birth defects that can include the brain and/or spinal cord. This is generally something that happens very early in pregnancy, and can vary widely in severity and expected outcome. Although the cause of most cases...

- **Sex Chromosome Variations**
  X and Y chromosome variations are conditions that result when a baby have a different number of sex chromosomes, also known as X & Y chromosomes, than we would expect to see in some or all of the cells in their body. Typically, girls have two X chromosomes while boys...

- **Microdeletion Syndromes**
  There are many different kinds of genetic conditions. Some are caused by whole extra or missing chromosomes (such as Down syndrome), while others are caused by changes in a specific gene (such as sickle cell anemia). There is a third group of genetic conditions called microdeletion syndromes. A microdeletion is...