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CHAPTER 1 Understanding Birth Defects

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   Karen Ericson and Teresa G. Odle
   More than three thousand types of birth defects have been identified. They have many causes and can affect any major organ or part of the body.

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   National studies show that cleft lip, cleft palate, and Down syndrome are the most common birth defects in the United States.

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   Beth Miller
   Researchers are trying to understand the possible genetic causes of common orthopedic birth defects.

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   Betty Mekdeci and Ted Schettler
   Studying the role that environmental factors play in causing birth defects is extremely challenging, but researchers are making progress.
5. Birth Defect Prevention
   Trust for America’s Health
   There are many things women can do before they become pregnant that can prevent birth defects.

6. Treating Birth Defects in the Womb
   Claudia Kalb
   Advances in fetal surgery have made it possible to treat birth defects in the womb, raising many ethical questions.

CHAPTER 2

Controversies About Birth Defects

1. All Pregnant Women Should Have Prenatal Testing for Down Syndrome
   The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
   All women, regardless of their age, should be offered prenatal screening for Down syndrome.

2. Prenatal Testing Should Not Be Expanded to All Women
   Victoria Seavilleklein
   Pregnant women are not always properly informed about the ramifications of prenatal screening, and it should not be routinely offered.

3. Plastic Surgery to Correct Down Syndrome Facial Features Is Unethical
   Ann K. Suziedelis
   Surgery on Down syndrome children for purely cosmetic purposes is disrespectful of their intrinsic human dignity, and it can further segregate them from society.
4. Plastic Surgery to Correct Down Syndrome Facial Features Is Ethical

*Arthur Caplan*

Surgery to correct Down syndrome features can improve the quality of a child’s life.

5. Assisted Reproductive Technologies Increase the Risk of Birth Defects

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

A national analysis of birth defects data shows that birth defects occur more often in children conceived with assisted reproductive technologies.

6. The Risk of Birth Defects from Assisted Reproductive Technologies Is Low

*Genevra Pittman*

The risks of birth defects for children born via assisted reproductive technologies are low and should not deter parents looking for help conceiving a child.

**CHAPTER 3**

**Personal Stories About Birth Defects**

1. Down Syndrome Does Not Make My Child Defective

*Lara Wilkinson*

A woman describes her experience of finding out her son has Down syndrome and how, after his birth, she learned what having the “perfect” child really means.

2. We Gave Our Baby Back to Heaven

*Dayna Olsen-Getty*

A young woman describes how she found out her baby had a severe birth defect and how she and her husband decided to end the pregnancy.
3. A Birth Defect Makes Dating Challenging 120
   Carla Sosenko
   A young woman describes how having a birth defect impacts her relationships with men.

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   A man describes how his birth defect has not prevented him from living a fulfilling and meaningful life.

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