

Some women will be treated with antibiotics during labour, even if their GBS test is negative. This would happen if:

- You have had another baby who developed GBS infection.
- You had a urine test during this pregnancy that was positive for GBS bacteria.
- You have a fever during labour.

The antibiotics will kill the GBS bacteria quickly and will help prevent GBS infection in your baby. However, some babies may still develop GBS infection even though their mother received antibiotics during labour and delivery. If you think your baby is sick, contact your doctor or go to the emergency department.

### Where can I get more information on GBS?

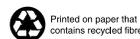
If you'd like to know more about GBS, talk with your doctor or your local public health nurse.

#### Public Health Services

|              |                               |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Amherst:     | 667-3319 or<br>1-800-767-3319 |
| Antigonish:  | 863-2743                      |
| Bridgewater: | 543-0850                      |
| Dartmouth:   | 481-5800                      |
| New Glasgow: | 752-5151                      |
| Sydney:      | 563-2400                      |
| Truro:       | 893-5820                      |
| Wolfville:   | 542-6310                      |
| Yarmouth:    | 742-7141                      |

# Pregnancy & Group B Streptococcus (GBS)

*What Every  
Pregnant Woman  
Should Know*



## What is Group B Streptococcus (GBS)?

Group B Streptococcus is a kind of bacteria found in some women's vagina, rectum, or bladder. As many as forty percent of women may have GBS bacteria in their body and not know it.

GBS does not usually cause infections in pregnant women, but it can infect a newborn baby during childbirth.

## How do newborns get GBS?

Most infected newborns get the GBS bacteria from their mother during delivery. This is when they come in direct contact with the bacteria.

## Are GBS infections common in newborns?

No. GBS infections in newborns are rare. Only 1-2% of newborns exposed to GBS during birth will become infected, but these babies can become seriously ill.

## What problems does GBS infection cause in newborns?

GBS can cause mild to severe infections in newborn babies. GBS can affect the blood, brain, lungs, and spinal cord. In severe cases it can lead to death.

## How are newborns treated for GBS?

All newborn babies are watched closely for symptoms of infection. Symptoms of GBS infection may include rapid breathing, pale or grey skin, fever or low body temperature, and convulsions.

Newborn babies who show signs of a GBS infection will be treated with antibiotics. A pediatrician may be asked to help look after these babies.

Most infants infected with GBS will become ill within the first seven days of life. However, the illness can show up as late as three months of age.

## How can I find out if I have GBS bacteria?

You can have a simple, painless test for GBS. In Nova Scotia, we recommend that **all** pregnant women be tested between their 35<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. Women with a planned caesarian delivery should still be tested. Your health care provider will take a sample from your vagina and rectum with a special Q-tip.

## What will make it less likely that my baby will get a GBS infection?

If your GBS test is **positive**, you will be given antibiotics when you go into labour.

If you were **not** tested, or your test result is not back when you go into labour, you may still be given antibiotics during labour. This would happen if:

- You go into labour before 37 weeks.
- Your water breaks 18 hours or more before delivery.

