

Group B Streptococcus

What is GBS?

GBS is a bacteria that is harmless to adults. It is like the normal bugs we get on our hands, only it is found in the vagina and rectum of around 30% of women. It is not a sexually transmitted infection nor is it a problem for other members in your family. GBS has no symptoms.

Why does it matter when you're pregnant?

GBS can be a problem for newborns as they have minimal defences against bacteria such as GBS. That is why we test towards the end of your pregnancy (35-37 weeks). It is transient (comes and goes) so we only test at the end of your pregnancy. Only a few babies become infected if they are not protected with antibiotics, but the ones that do tend to quite sick with GBS. By treating positive women with antibiotics we can reduce the risk of your baby getting sick.

How do we test for it?

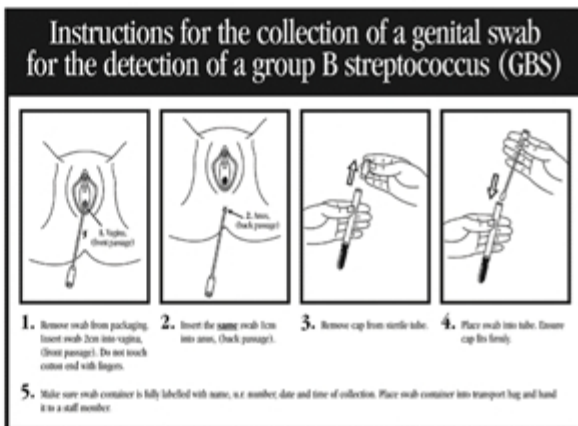
GBS is present in the rectum and vagina of up to 30% of women, that is why when we test for it you will need to swab you vagina and rectum. See the picture to the right. Your healthcare provider should also talk you through doing the swab yourself.

What if you are positive?

If you have tested positive you will need an intravenous canula put in your hand once you're in labour or when your waters break, so you can be given antibiotics. These are for your baby really, not for you. Ideally, you will have 4 hours of antibiotics treatment to best protect your newborn.

What happens if we don't have time?

If you are fortunate enough to have a quick labour and birth, your baby will be monitored for 24 hours. Then blood tests will be done on your baby, one at birth and one at 24 hours of age. We are looking for markers that show up in the blood if an infection is present. Rest assured this will all be explained to you before anything is done to your baby.



- GBS is not Sexually Transmitted infection.
- A simple vaginal & rectal swab is all you need.
- GBS Infection in your newborn can be prevented.
- Call your midwife when labour starts.
- Call your midwife when your waters break.
- Ask you midwife or doctor about GBS.
- As with all test you have a choice.

Prepared by Kellee's Kards for Midwifery Matters
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For further information:
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