

Group B Streptococcus

Group B Streptococcus (GBS) is a type of bacteria (germ) that can be found in up to 40% of pregnant women. Group B Strep is rarely passed to the baby during pregnancy or after birth, but is most likely passed to the baby during the birth process. Most babies who get GBS from their mothers do not have any problems. A few, can become sick. This can cause major health problems (pneumonia, brain damage) or even result in death.

WHAT IS GBS?

GBS is a kind of bacteria that is often found in the mouth or lower digestive, urinary, or reproductive tracts of women and men. It is different from the germ (Group A Streptococcus) that causes Strep throat.

A person who has the bacteria but does not have signs of infection is a carrier. Being a carrier of GBS usually does not cause any danger to a woman's health. However, if a woman is pregnant, she can pass GBS to her baby.

TESTING FOR GBS

Your doctor may order a lab test to check for GBS. A woman may be a carrier at some times and not at others. Test results may be negative (not a carrier at the time the sample was taken) but positive at another time during the pregnancy.

TREATMENT

If the test for GBS is positive, the pregnant woman is treated with antibiotics during labor to try to prevent infection in the baby. This prevents most cases of GBS in the newborn. If she is treated prior to going into labor, a woman can become positive again after treatment and before her baby is born. If she becomes positive, she can pass GBS to her baby.

SUMMARY

Many doctors test and treat for GBS differently. You will need to discuss your concerns with your doctor to decide what is best for you and your baby.

For more information please contact:

South Dakota Department of Health
615 East Fourth Street
Pierre, SD 57501-1700
605-773-3737

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