



Group B Strep (GBS)

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Fast Facts

- In the U.S., group B strep is the leading cause of [meningitis](#) (infection of the fluid and lining around the brain) and **sepsis** (infection of the blood) in a newborn's first week of life (early-onset disease).
- About 25% of pregnant women carry group B strep in the rectum or vagina. Group B strep bacteria may come and go in people's bodies without symptoms.
- CDC's guidelines recommend that a pregnant woman be tested for group B strep when she is 35 to 37 weeks pregnant.
- A pregnant woman who tests positive for group B strep and gets antibiotics during labor has only a 1 in 4,000 chance of delivering a baby with group B strep disease, compared to a 1 in 200 chance if she does not get antibiotics during labor.
- Any pregnant woman who had a baby with group B strep disease in the past, or who has had a bladder (urinary tract) infection during this pregnancy caused by group B strep should receive antibiotics during labor.
- Most [early-onset group B strep disease](#) in newborns can be prevented by giving pregnant women antibiotics (medicine) through the vein (IV) during labor.
- Newborns are at increased risk for a group B strep infection if their mother tests positive for group B strep during pregnancy.
- The antibiotics used to prevent early-onset group B strep disease in newborns only help during labor — they can't be taken before labor, because the bacteria can grow back quickly.
- The rate of serious group B strep disease increases with age; average age of cases in non-pregnant adults is about 60 years old.



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Related Links

[Active Bacterial Core surveillance \(ABCs\)](#)


[CDC Streptococcus Laboratory](#)

Related Pages


- [Print & Electronic Group B Strep \(GBS\) Resources](#)
- [If Left Untreated, Strep B Could Seriously Harm Your](#)

Baby

Also available as flyer  [87 KB, 1 page]

- [Protect Your Baby from Group B Strep!](#)
- [Group B Strep - What You Need to Know](#)  [53 KB, 1 page]
- [Protect Your Unborn Baby or Newborn from Infections](#)

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