



### July is Group B Streptococcal Disease Awareness Month.

Group B streptococcus (strep) is a common bacterium often carried in your intestines or lower genital tract. Group B strep is usually harmless in adults. In newborns, however, it can cause a serious illness known as group B strep disease.

If you are pregnant, get a group B strep screening test during your third trimester. If you have group B strep, antibiotic treatment during labor can protect your baby.

Group B streptococcal septicemia is a severe bacterial infection that affects newborn infants.

#### Causes:

Many healthy people carry group B strep bacteria in their bodies. Group B strep bacteria are not sexually transmitted, and they are not spread through food or water. You may carry group B strep in your body for just a short period of time, it may come and go, or you may always have it.

Group B strep can spread to a baby during a vaginal delivery if the baby is exposed to — or swallows — fluids containing group B strep.

Some individuals, such as older adults and those with chronic health conditions, can develop a more serious infection from group B strep.

#### Symptoms:

General symptoms in newborns:

- ✂ Anxious or stressed appearance.
- ✂ Blue appearance (cyanosis).

Breathing difficulties such as:

- ✂ Flaring of the nostrils.
- ✂ Grunting noises.
- ✂ Rapid breathing.
- ✂ Short periods without breathing.
- ✂ Irregular or abnormal heart rate - may be fast or very slow.
- ✂ Pale appearance (pallor) with cold skin.
- ✂ Unstable body temperature (low or high).

Infants: Two forms of the disease may occur in infants:

- Early-onset group B strep disease: A baby with early-onset group B strep disease becomes sick within one week after birth.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- ✂ Fever.
- ✂ Difficulty feeding.
- ✂ Lethargy.

- Late-onset group B strep disease: Late-onset group B strep disease develops within a week to a few months after birth, usually within the first month.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- Difficulty breathing.
- Fever.
- Lethargy.
- Irritability.

### Prevention:

To prevent group B streptococcus from spreading to your baby during labor, your doctor can give you an IV antibiotic — usually penicillin or a related drug — when labor begins.

Antibiotic treatment during labor is also recommended if you:

- Have a .
- Haven't delivered your baby.
- Go into labor before 37 weeks and haven't been tested for group B strep.

Intra-partum antibiotic prophylaxis (IAP) is recommended for:

- Women who delivered a previous child with group B streptococcus (GBS) disease.
- Women with GBS bacteriuria in the current pregnancy, i.e. have an ongoing urinary tract infection.
- Women with a GBS-positive screening result in the current pregnancy.
- Women with unknown GBS status who tend to deliver at less than 37 weeks gestation (early labor).
- Women who develop fever during labor, i.e. they have an intra-partum temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) or greater.
- Women who have not delivered their baby within 18 hours of rupture of membranes.

Antibiotic therapy isn't usually needed if you have a C-section delivery unless your membranes rupture or labor has already begun before surgery.

If you test positive for group B strep, remind your health care team during labor.

### Reference Links:

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group\\_B\\_streptococcal\\_infection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_B_streptococcal_infection)
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001366.htm>
- <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/group-b-strep/basics/prevention/con-20033853>

For any enquiry or assistance please contact: [wellness@medicaretpa.co.in](mailto:wellness@medicaretpa.co.in)

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