

Group B streptococcus disease

Group B streptococcus is usually harmless, but to newborns, it can cause serious diseases.

1 Introduction

Many people who carry group B strep are unaware that they have it. The bacteria may be present for a short period, may come and go, or the carrier may always have it. Please use this guide to understand group b strep disease.

2 Cause

Group B strep is a natural bacteria that lives in the body. It is typically found in the digestive and lower reproductive tracts of both men and women. The bacteria cannot be spread through food or water.

Pregnant women who carry the bacteria can pass it to their babies during delivery.

3 Symptoms

Most adults who carry group B strep show no signs or symptoms. In some instances, group B strep can cause a urinary tract infection, sepsis, or pneumonia.

Babies infected by the bacteria can become critically ill. They may experience early or late on-set symptoms such as:

- Fever
- Irritability
- Lethargy
- Unstable heart
- Difficulty feeding
- Difficulty breathing
- Kidney problems

4 Complications

Babies infected with group B strep may have long-term problems. Some complications include:

- Blindness
- Hearing loss
- Cerebral palsy
- Learning problems
- Seizures

5 Diagnosis & Treatment

If you are pregnant, your provider will order a screening between weeks 35 and 37 of pregnancy. The testing consists of a swab of the vagina and the rectum.

Pregnant women with group B strep are treated with antibiotics during labor and delivery to prevent passing the bacteria to their baby.

If a baby is infected, the baby will be given IV antibiotics. Depending on the severity of the condition, fluids, oxygen, or other medication may be administered as well.

Did you know?

Group B strep affects about 1 in every 2,000 babies

For more information on group B streptococcus, please visit www.americanpregnancy.org

References:

<https://www.groupbstreptinternational.org/what-is-group-b-strep.html#pogbs>

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/group-b-strep-infection.aspx>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/group-b-strep/symptoms-causes/syc-20351729>