

Early Discharge Group B Strep

Group B Strep is a bacteria that lives in most peoples lower intestine. In about 30% of women, it is also present in their vagina.

For newborns that come into contact with GBS during birth, about 1 in 200, or 0.5%, of newborns will become sick. GBS infection in newborns can cause pneumonia, infection of the blood (sepsis), or infection of the lining around the brain (meningitis).

To help prevent newborns from getting sick from GBS it is recommended that antibiotics be given during labour. Ideally, antibiotics have been given at least 4 hours before the birth of your baby.

In some cases antibiotics either have not been given (because you have declined them, or because your labour progressed so quickly that there was not enough time to deliver the antibiotics) or only one dose of antibiotics was given less than 4 hours before your baby was born.

In these cases it is recommended that your baby be observed for 24-36 hours after birth for signs or symptoms of GBS infection in the hospital.

If you choose to go home before 24 hours after delivery (if you have delivered in the hospital), or if you choose to stay home following a birth centre or home birth, there are a few things to watch for that could be a sign of a GBS infection.

Things to watch for are:

A high temperature (fever) – greater than 37.5 C (even after you unwrap your newborn)

A low temperature – lower than 36.1 C (even after you put your baby skin to skin with a warm blanket over both of you)

Poor muscle tone – your baby should be well flexed and never “floppy”

Blue or very pale in colour

Fast breathing – more than 60 breaths every minute

“Grunting” – when your baby makes a noise with every single breath, no matter what you do (put your baby to the breast, skin to skin, shift position)

Your midwife may have you take your newborns temperature under his or her arm every 4 hours in the first 24 hours

Please call the pager if you are ever worried about the above symptoms, or with any other questions or concerns.