



Barnmorskemottagningar

Patientinformation: GBS vid graviditet översatt till engelska

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# GBS during pregnancy

## GBS (group B streptococci)

Group B streptococci, abbreviated to GBS, are bacteria that occur naturally in the intestines. They can sometimes be transferred to the vagina or the urethra, and often occur on the skin. One in three fertile women has GBS in the womb without having any symptoms. Because it is so common it is generally considered as a natural condition rather than a disease. The occurrence of GBS has nothing to do with intimate hygiene and does not mean that you wash yourself too seldom. You have not been infected by anyone; GBS is not regarded as a sexually transmitted disease.

## GBS during pregnancy

The majority of pregnant women who have GBS exhibit no symptoms at all and their children are born perfectly healthy. In rare cases the bacteria may cause a urinary tract infection, making it painful to urinate and needing to urinate often.

It is common, though, to find low levels of GBS in women's urine without any symptoms of urinary tract infection. In such cases the infection is not treated with antibiotics, since the bacteria seldom respond to such treatment and very often recur. Repeated treatment with antibiotics could induce resistance in the bacteria (i.e. they become resistant to antibiotics).

Nor is there any evidence that treatment with antibiotics alleviates or prevents the disease in the child.

## Antibiotics during delivery

Instead, if the occurrence of GBS is noticed antibiotics are given to the mother-to-be during childbirth. The medicine (normally penicillin or other antibiotics in the case of allergy) is given intravenously every six hours during labour. The reason for this method of treatment is that in rare cases GBS can cause an infection of the baby, which can become very sick.

It is believed that the bacteria can be transferred to the baby during childbirth when the baby passes through the vagina. That is why antibiotics are not given for planned caesareans, since the baby will not pass through the vagina.

Prematurely born babies run a greater risk of becoming infected. For this reason, antibiotics are often given to women who give birth early, even if GBS is not found during pregnancy.

## Women who have had complications during previous pregnancies

Women who have had complications in earlier pregnancies that may have been caused by GBS are given specific treatment. In such cases it may be necessary to adapt healthcare measures, such as taking more samples. Your midwife and maternity doctor can give you advice.