



Vivante Midwifery

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Group B Strep Fact Sheet

5% to 35% of childbearing women carry Group B Strep (GBS) in their intestines and/or vagina. It doesn't usually cause an infection in the mother, but can be a problem for the baby after a vaginal delivery.

Babies whose mothers carry GBS **and** who have additional risk factors for GBS have about a 5% chance of becoming ill (5 out of 100). Additional risk factors include:

- The mother having a bladder or kidney infection at any time during the pregnancy that was caused by GBS
- Onset of labor before 37 weeks gestation
- Breaking of the bag of waters before 37 weeks gestation
- In labor, the water bag being broken for 18 or more hours before the baby is born
- Fever over 100.4 degrees F in the mother during labor

Babies whose mothers carry GBS, but who have no additional risk factors are less likely to get sick. Their risk of infection is 0.5% or about 1 in 200.

Babies whose mothers test negative for GBS and who have no additional risk factors have only a remote chance of getting GBS disease – about 1 in 3000.

80% of babies who get GBS disease get sick in the first week after birth.

20% of babies who get GBS disease get sick after the first week and in the first two months after birth.

Meningitis is more common in late onset disease.

If a baby gets GBS disease, it can be fatal in 5% to 15% of cases. In those babies that survive, it can cause permanent damage such as hearing or vision loss, cerebral palsy, or other physical or mental disabilities.

The chance of a baby dying from GBS disease is about 1 in 3400 in the highest risk groups.

Babies whose mothers are GBS positive AND who receive antibiotics in labor are less likely to get GBS disease (about 1 in 4000 with one dose of antibiotics at least 4 hours prior to the birth, to 1 in 20,000 with more than one dose of antibiotics). If a baby still gets GBS disease, despite the mother receiving antibiotics in labor, that baby is much less likely to die and much less likely to be permanently damaged by GBS compared to a sick baby who had no antibiotic exposure during labor.