

Rockyview Maternity and Family Practice Group

Group B Strep. (GBS) in pregnancy

**What is Group B Strep(GBS*

Group B. Strep. (GBS) is a certain kind of bacteria that lives in the vaginal or rectal areas of 10-35 percent of all healthy adult women. A woman who has GBS on her skin is said to be "colonized" with this bacteria. For every 100 pregnant women colonized with GBS, 1 or 2 babies are infected with this bacteria while they're being born and can get sick.

**If I have GBS, what could happen*

Carrying the bacteria in your body when you're pregnant doesn't make you or your baby sick. When you are pregnant and have GBS, your baby could get the bacteria from you during delivery and get sick. Infected babies need treatment. If your doctor thinks the baby is infected with GBS, your baby may need to be kept in the hospital a little longer for close observation and possible treatment with antibiotics.

**How will I know if I have GBS*

Your doctor will do a swab from your vagina and anus at 36 weeks to see if you have GBS.

**If I am colonized with GBS, what can I do?*

If your swab is positive for GBS, your doctor will give you intravenous antibiotics when you arrive at the hospital in labour or when your water breaks. If you take antibiotics while you are in labour, the chances are less likely that your baby will be infected with GBS, but not impossible.

**Why won't my doctor give me antibiotics before I go into labour?*

Antibiotics only temporarily decrease the numbers of GBS bacteria and do not eliminate them totally. There is also increased risk of allergic reactions and bacterial resistance to antibiotics when used repetitively for prolonged periods.