

VALLEY WOMEN'S CLINIC, PLLC

17722 Talbot Road South
Renton, WA 98055-5744
Appointments: 425-228-0722
Fax: 425-271-2566
www.valleywomens.com

Group B Strep

What is GBS

Group B Strep (GBS) is a commonly found bacteria in the human body. 40 out of 100 of all healthy women test positive for GBS. Usually, the presence of GBS doesn't present any danger to a woman's health. This bacteria is different from Group A Strep that causes strep throat. GBS is normally found in the vagina and rectum. A woman who tests positive for GBS is called a GBS carrier.

What is GBS Infection?

Sometimes GBS can cause a serious illness. The people at risk for GBS infections are newborns and women at the time of delivery and soon thereafter.

How Do Newborns Get Sick From GBS?

The bacteria may travel up from the vagina into the uterus (womb). Babies may get the disease when they swallow or inhale infected fluid. Babies also may get GBS infection when they are passing through the birth canal at the time of delivery. However, most of the babies exposed to GBS will not become sick.

What Are The Effects of GBS on The Baby?

If newborns get infected, they usually become sick within the first 7 days of life. The bacteria may cause life-threatening illness if it enters the blood, lungs and brain of the baby. If left untreated, the GBS infection may cause learning problems, loss of sight and hearing and lung disease. Rarely, a very serious infection may even result in death of the baby.

What are The Effects On The Mother?

GBS may cause infection in the urine and uterus after delivery. Women who get sick from GBS may develop fever, chills and uterine pain. It is usually not life threatening and can be treated with antibiotics.

How Do We Prevent GBS Infection?

Your doctor will do vaginal cultures a month before your due date. Women who test positive for GBS will be treated during labor. The presence of GBS before the onset of labor usually doesn't cause any problems. Antibiotics are given to the mother through the vein prior to delivery. Medical research shows that this treatment greatly reduces the risk of GBS infection in the baby.

Finally...

GBS is a common bacterium in the human body. It usually doesn't cause any problems. Sometimes, it causes GBS infection, a dangerous condition for both the mother and the baby. It can be easily prevented with testing during pregnancy and treatment during labor. That is why prenatal care is so important. If you have questions about GBS, please ask your doctor.