

# Group B Strep (GBS) and Pregnancy

## What is Group B Strep (GBS)?

- Group B Strep (GBS) is a type of bacteria (germ) that lives in the body. GBS can be found in the vagina and rectum. GBS is **not** a STI (an infection you get from sex).
- GBS usually does not cause serious illness. Some people may have the GBS bacteria in their body, but show no symptoms.

## How does GBS affect me if I'm pregnant?

- Most pregnant people with GBS bacteria in their body have no symptoms or health problems. However, GBS can sometimes cause infections in the uterus or urinary tract (organs in the body that produce, store, and get rid of urine (pee)).
- If someone has GBS late in pregnancy, there is a chance it can be passed on to the baby during labor.



## How does GBS affect my baby?

There are 2 types of GBS infections that can happen in newborns. Both types can be serious.

- **Early-onset infections** happen during the first week of life (usually within the first 24-48 hours). These infections can be passed on to the baby during birth.
  - If a baby is born before 37 weeks, they may have a higher risk of becoming infected.
  - These infections can lead to serious health problems, such as lung and blood infections, and meningitis (an infection that causes swelling of the brain).
- **Late-onset infections** happen after the first 6 days of life. These infections can be passed on to the baby during birth or through contact with someone with GBS.
  - Signs of late-onset infection in your baby include: slowness or not being very active, high fever, poor feeding, and throwing up. Call your baby's doctor right away if they have any of these symptoms.
  - These infections can lead to serious health problems, such as meningitis and pneumonia.

## Can these infections be prevented?

Testing and treatment can help prevent early-onset infections in your baby.

- You can get tested for GBS late in your pregnancy (between 35 and 37 weeks). Your doctor will take a sample from your vagina and rectum to see if you have GBS.
- If the test shows that you have GBS, you will likely get antibiotics (medicines that help treat infections). These medicines will only work if they are given during labor.

**Talk with your CHN provider if you have more questions!**