



Ask your doctor for a GBS test when you are 35 to 37 weeks pregnant (in your 9<sup>th</sup> month). The test is an easy swab of the vagina and rectum that should not hurt.

Finding the GBS bacteria *does not* mean that you are not clean, and it does *not* mean that you have a sexually transmitted disease. The bacteria are not spread from food, sex, water, or anything that you might have come into contact with. They can come and go naturally in the body.

The medicine to stop GBS from spreading to your baby is an antibiotic given during labor. The antibiotic (usually penicillin) is given to *you* through an IV (in the vein) *during childbirth*.

It does *not* work to take antibiotics for GBS before labor. The bacteria can grow back so fast that taking the medicine before you begin labor does not prevent the bacteria from spreading to your baby during childbirth.

My doctor explained that I should not take antibiotics now. To protect my baby, I have to wait until my labor starts.



I talked with my doctor and made a plan for labor. It helps put my mind at ease to be prepared.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions. You can also get information from the CDC website: [www.cdc.gov/groupbstrep](http://www.cdc.gov/groupbstrep)



Are *You* Pregnant?



Protect your baby from group B strep!

# Protect your baby from group B strep!

If you are pregnant, you need to know about **group B strep**. This type of bacteria is very common to all types of women and can be passed on to your baby during childbirth. **Your baby can get very sick and even die if you are not tested and treated.**

Group B strep (sometimes called GBS) is a type of bacteria that is often found in the vagina and rectum of healthy women. In the United States, about 1 in 4 women carry this type of bacteria. Women of any race or ethnicity can carry these bacteria.

**Being a carrier for these bacteria does not mean you have an infection.** It only means that you have group B strep bacteria in your body, usually living in the rectum or vagina. You would not feel the bacteria or have symptoms like a yeast infection. These bacteria are usually not harmful to you — only to your baby during labor.

**I never heard of GBS before, but my doctor told me anyone could carry these bacteria.**



The antibiotic is only given **during labor** — you do *not* need to worry about getting it for yourself before labor. Other people in the house, including kids, are *not* at risk of getting sick from GBS.

Your baby's doctor will check on the baby once he or she is born. There is no need for the baby to get extra antibiotics or other medicine after he or she is born, unless the doctor tells you that they are needed.

If you are allergic to penicillin, there are still other choices to help treat you during labor. Talk with your doctor and nurses about it.

**Each time you are pregnant, you need to be tested for GBS.** It doesn't matter if you did or did not have this type of bacteria before — *each pregnancy is different.*

If you think you might have a C-section or go into labor early (premature), talk with your doctor or nurse about your personal GBS plan.

**I found out that my girlfriend had to have IV antibiotics when she had her son. He's a healthy toddler now, which makes me feel better about all this GBS stuff.**

## What you can do *before* you go into labor:

- Ask your doctor for a GBS test when you are 35 to 37 weeks pregnant (9<sup>th</sup> month).
- If you are allergic to penicillin or other antibiotics, make sure to tell your doctor or nurse about any reactions you have had.
- If your test shows that you carry the bacteria, talk with your doctor about a plan for labor.
- Continue your regular check-ups, and always call your doctor or nurse if you have any problems.

## When your water breaks or when you go into labor:

If you have *not* had your GBS test when labor starts, remind the staff that you do not know your GBS status.

### If you *are* a GBS carrier:

- Go to the hospital. The antibiotics work best if you get them at least 4 hours before you deliver.
- Tell the labor and delivery staff at the hospital that you are a group B strep carrier.
- **Speak up** if you are allergic to penicillin.
- Expect to get IV antibiotics (medicine through the vein) during labor.
- It is fine to breastfeed after your baby is born.

*more info*

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions. You can also get information from the CDC website: [www.cdc.gov/groupbstrep](http://www.cdc.gov/groupbstrep)