

Fact Sheet

GBS-Taking your baby home.

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About 1 per 100 babies whose mothers tested positive for GBS may develop an infection.

What is GBS (Group B Streptococcus)?

Group B streptococcus is a bacteria found in the human body. Approximately 10-30% of men and women carry it in their intestines.

It is not related to hygiene and it is usually harmless to adults. A woman who carries GBS can pass it on to her baby once the amniotic sac ("waters") breaks or starts leaking.

While the risk of infection is low GBS infection may cause your baby to develop pneumonia or meningitis. If left untreated this infection can be fatal.

It is recommended that you both stay in hospital for 24- 48 hours following the birth so we can watch your baby to see if your baby develops the infection.

During this 24-48 hour stay, staff will take your baby's temperature, watch the breathing and heart rate at each feed time.

If you were given antibiotic treatment in labour there is less risk of baby developing this infection. If this is the situation, and your baby is well you may take baby home after 24 hours.

We recommend you and your baby stay in hospital for up to 48 hours if:

- you were not given antibiotics at least 4 hours before the birth of your baby
- your membranes (bag of waters) were broken for more than 18 hours before birth

- your baby was less than 37 weeks gestation at birth
- if you tested positive for GBS during pregnancy or labour.

If you decide to go home before your baby is 48 hours old we suggest that you take the baby's temperature with each feed until they are 48 hours old.

Most babies with **early onset GBS** infection show symptoms within 24 hours of birth, some babies may develop symptoms later. Even though rare, babies are at risk of late onset GBS infection until 3 months of age

Parents are the best people to notice any changes in their baby's behaviour.

Signs of GBS infection

- temperature – below 36.5 or above 37.2 degrees (taken under the armpit with the arm held close to body)
- poor feeding or refusing to feed
- excessively tired or floppy, difficult to wake.
- difficulty breathing (fast or noisy breathing)
- body stiffening or persistent jerking movements
- skin is pale and /or sweaty
- irritable.



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If you are unsure of the above signs and symptoms, refer to the factsheet: Signs of a well-baby or the webpage WHD-Maternity-signs-of-a-well-baby

**Contact your Midwife or the hospital immediately if you have any concerns:
Westmead hospital (business hours)
08:00am-08:00pm.
The WNH-Maternity-Midwifery-at-home
0419255898
The midwifery@home webpage:
WNH-Maternity-Midwifery-at-home
OR
Take your baby to the emergency department of the hospital where baby was born. If born at Westmead Hospital, take baby to the Children's Hospital, Westmead.
OR
Ring 000 in an emergency**

We welcome further feedback on this brochure as a way of continually improving our service.

Send your feedback to:
WSLHD-Get_Involved@health.nsw.gov.au