

Fact Sheet

GBS – Taking baby home

womensnewbornhealth.com.au

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 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
- If 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 37.5 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 <https://www.wslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/WNH/Health-Information/Newborn-Baby-Care>

or scan the QR code



Contact your Midwife or the hospital immediately if you have any concerns:

Westmead: 08:00am - 08:00pm.

Midwifery at Home contact number 0419255898

WNH-Maternity-Midwifery-at-home

webpage scan the QR code



Auburn: 08:00am -16:30pm.

Midwifery at Home contact numbers 0438 420 913 or 0438 285 488

Blacktown: 08:00am - 08:00pm

Midwifery at Home on 0409 912 142

Or your MGP Midwife

After hours:

You may contact Health Direct Australia on 1800 022 222

OR

Visit or contact your local GP

If it is an emergency and your baby requires IMMEDIATE medical attention go straight to hospital or call 000 for an ambulance

If born at Westmead Hospital, take baby to the Children's Hospital, Westmead.

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

Send your feedback to:

wslhd-wmcdwnhwebsite@health.nsw.gov.au

