Health Facts for You

UWHealth

Group B Streptococcus (GBS)

Group B streptococcus (GBS) is a type of bacteria found in the bowel of up to 35 out of 100 healthy adults. In women, GBS can also be found in the vagina and bladder. Although similar in name, GBS is different from group A strep, the bacteria that causes strep throat.

Colonized GBS

If your body carries GBS but shows no sign of infection is said to be "colonized." In some cases, GBS can invade your body and cause a serious infection. It can occur in the elderly or in those with chronic health issues. If you are pregnant and you have colonized GBS, you can pass it to your baby during childbirth.

GBS Screening

If you are pregnant, you will get screened for group B strep during your pregnancy. You will have a vaginal and rectal culture around the 35th week of pregnancy. If you have GBS, you will receive antibiotics during labor to help prevent GBS from being passed to your baby. GBS is common in pregnancy. If you have any questions about GBS, please ask at your next prenatal visit.

Infants with GBS

Most babies who get group B strep from their mothers do not have any problems. Every year about 1-2 out of 100 babies born will develop serious GBS disease. This includes sepsis (blood infections), meningitis (infection of the fluid and lining around the brain) and pneumonia. Serious GBS disease could lead to death or longterm problems such as hearing and vision problems.

Who to Call

If you have any further questions, please contact your closest Ob-Gyn clinic.

20 S. Park St. Clinic* 20 S. Park St., Suite 307 & 506 Madison, WI 53715 (608) 287-2830

Arboretum Ob-Gyn Resident Physician Clinic 1102 S. Park St. Madison, WI 53715 (608) 287-5898

Union Corners Clinic* 2402 Winnebago St. Madison, WI 53704 (608) 242-6840

West Clinic* 451 Junction Rd. Madison, WI 53717 (608) 265-7601

*Location includes Midwifery clinic

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8348.