

Group B Streptococcus (GBS)

At approximately 35--37 weeks of pregnancy, you will be tested for a bacteria called Group B streptococcus (GBS). The testing is performed by obtaining a vaginal culture. GBS is an organism that can be found in the digestive and reproductive tracts of both men and women. It is frequently found in the vaginas and rectums of women. This is a normal finding and is not considered an infection, nor is it sexually transmitted. GBS does not usually cause serious infection but during pregnancy it can affect the newborn if the baby is exposed to the organism during labor and delivery.

If the vaginal culture is positive (indicating that you are colonized with this bacteria) you will receive IV antibiotic therapy during labor to prevent infection in the newborn. Penicillin is used unless you have a penicillin allergy. The antibiotic is given throughout the labor until the time of delivery.

If you are colonized with Group B streptococcus (GBS) it is important that you go to Labor & Delivery once you break your water in order to initiate antibiotic treatment. It is not recommended that you labor at home with ruptured membranes if you test GBS positive.