



GROUP B STREP

Group B Strep is a bacteria that can be cultured from the vagina of 10-40% of all pregnant women. Babies of these mothers are not affected during pregnancy but are exposed to the bacteria during labor and delivery. Of these babies that are exposed, 1-2% will become sick.

Various risk factors have been identified for patients most likely to benefit from antibiotics to prevent this infection. Those at high risk include preterm labor, (less than 37 weeks) preterm rupture of membranes, previous sibling with Group B Strep, mothers whose water has been broken for more than 18 hours, or mothers who have an elevated temperature in labor. Your physician may decide there are other problems that put you at higher risk.

Risk factors alone, however, will not identify all pregnant women who carry Group B Strep. Recent studies have shown benefit from culturing ALL pregnant women at 35-37 weeks of pregnancy and treating women who do carry the bacteria. Treatment is with an intravenous antibiotic in labor. It is not necessary or beneficial to treat with the I.V. antibiotic until the time of labor. The antibiotic used is safe for the baby.

If you have any questions about Group B Strep testing, please ask your healthcare provider.