

Invasive Group B *Streptococcus* (GBS)- Factsheet

What is invasive GBS?

Bacteria called group B *Streptococcus* (group B strep, GBS) cause GBS disease. GBS bacteria live in people's gastrointestinal and genital tracts. Invasive GBS infection occurs when the bacteria have invaded normally sterile parts of the body such as the blood, which is known as GBS disease.

What are the symptoms of invasive GBS?

Invasive GBS symptoms depend on the part of the body that is infected. Symptoms of bacteremia (bloodstream infection) and sepsis include fever, chills, low alertness. While symptoms of pneumonia include fever, chills, cough, difficulty breathing, and chest pain. Skin, bone, and joint infections also occur.

Symptoms of GBS disease are different in newborns compared to people of other ages who get GBS disease. GBS disease symptoms in newborns and babies include fever, difficulty feeding, irritability or lethargy, difficulty breathing, and blueish color to the skin. Some pregnant women test positive for GBS bacteria during routine screening towards the end of their pregnancy but do not have any symptoms.

How is invasive GBS spread?

How GBS bacteria is spread is generally unknown. Pregnant women can pass the bacteria to their babies during delivery. In the United States, there's no evidence that GBS bacteria spread through food, water, or anything that people might have come into contact with.

Who gets GBS?

Anyone can get GBS disease, but newborns and adults 65 years or older who have certain medical conditions are at increased risk for GBS disease.

What treatment is available for people with GBS?

Antibacterial therapy is used for invasive GBS infections.

Do infected people need to be kept home from school, work or daycare?

People who are sick should stay home until they feel well enough to return and have not had a fever for 24 hours. People with invasive infections often will need hospital care.

How can I protect myself and my family from getting invasive GBS?

There are currently no vaccines to prevent GBS disease.

Ways to prevent GBS disease during the first week of a newborn's life include: testing pregnant women for GBS bacteria and giving antibiotics, during labor, to women at increased risk.