

Parent & Carer Information

Group B Streptococcus going home

www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/royal-hospital-for-women

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Discharge home of babies at risk of Early Onset Group B Streptococcus (EOGBS) infection

Congratulations on your baby's arrival. The information below is for you or a relative who wants to know more about Group B Streptococcus (GBS) and what to expect in the next few days.

GBS is a bacterium which can invade the body and cause serious infection such as:

- Sepsis (infection of the blood)
- Pneumonia (infection of the lungs)
- Meningitis (infection around the brain)

Most GBS infections in babies are of early onset (showing within the first 6 days of life). That is why we recommend that you stay in hospital for 48 hours after your baby is born for observation. During this stay, midwives perform some additional observations on your baby to help pick up any early signs of infection. If you have decided to go home early, we recommend that you monitor your baby and contact the hospital immediately if you have any concerns.

Why is my baby more at risk?

You may have tested positive for GBS in your pregnancy or you have one of many other potential risk factors. Talk to your midwife or doctor if you are not sure why your baby is at risk.

Why we recommend that you stay in hospital for 48 hours?

About 1 in 1000 babies whose mother has tested positive to GBS in pregnancy will develop a serious infection. Antibiotic treatment given to you in labour will reduce but not eliminate this risk. An

otherwise healthy baby with EOGBS infection **can become very unwell within a matter of hours**. A baby who develops EOGBS infection, usually does so in the first 6-24 hours after birth. However, some symptoms will not occur until 24-48 hours after birth, and very rarely up to six days.

How can I monitor my baby for signs of EOGBS infection?

Parents are the best people to notice any changes in their baby. We recommend that you write the observations on the chart provided to help you become aware of any significant changes.

Knowing the typical signs of GBS infection in young babies is important. Sometimes these can be subtle.

These are signs to look for in your baby:

- Noisy breathing, moaning, breathing very fast, working hard to breathe when you look at the chest or tummy, or not breathing at all
- Very sleepy and/or unresponsive
- Unusual crying
- Unusually floppy
- Not feeding well or not keeping milk down
- A high or low temperature and/or hot or cold to the touch
- Changes in their skin colour

What to do if any of these signs start showing in my baby?

- Please call the hospital, your midwife or doctor to discuss these signs – do not delay.
- If you are really concerned, please seek urgent help at your closest hospital

For more information on EOGBS see:
Australia: [Group B Strep Test](#) Pregnancy birth & baby (Aus. Gov. Dept. Health and Aged care 2022)