

GBS-positivity and prevention of early GBS infection in the newborn

According to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare early GBS disease cases in newborns (blood and/or cerebrospinal fluid findings in infants under 7 days of age) have decreased in recent years (in 2022 0.08/1000 live births vs. in 2012-2016 0.2-0.4/1000 live births)

Improved screening and care practices for women in labor probably explains the decrease in early GBS disease in newborns. **Most early GBS cases can be prevented by administering antimicrobial prophylaxis to GBS-colonized mothers whose newborns are at risk of GBS disease.**

GBS bacteria can cause severe systemic infection in newborns, called sepsis or meningitis. It can also cause pneumonia.

About one in 100 newborns born to GBS-carrying mothers develop symptomatic infection. Symptoms of GBS in newborns include tenderness, yellowing, poor feeding, fever or hypothermia.

Severe and widespread GBS infections can cause long-term problems, such as hearing or vision loss or developmental disorders.