Group B Streptococcus (GBS)

What Group B strep is
Group B strep is a germ that lives in the vagina or lower intestine of some healthy women. Men can have it, too.

Group B strep is different from Group A strep. (Group A causes strep throat.) Most people who have the Group B strep germ don't feel sick. So they don't know that they have it.

- Women sometimes carry the Group B strep germ and can pass it to their baby when the baby is born.
- Most babies born to women carrying the Group B strep germ do not get sick. But a few babies do get sick.

How Group B strep can harm your baby
When babies do get sick from Group B strep, it usually happens during their first week. But they might get sick as late as 3 months later.

If your baby gets sick, he could get:

- Blood infection
- Pneumonia
- Lung damage
- Brain damage
- Meningitis. Meningitis can cause hearing loss.

How you can protect yourself and your baby against Group B strep

- Ask your doctor to test you for Group B strep. Get the test close to the time your baby is born.
- You can get tested again while you are in labor.
- If you have Group B strep, ask your doctor to give you medicine while you're in labor to protect your baby. This medicine will be given through a needle in your vein.

This page was last edited on October 3, 2003.

You can find this page online at: http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/information/hearingloss/causes/groupb.jsp