

Hi and welcome to our fifth e-newsletter - we hope you find it full of useful and interesting information. All you need to do is click on the links below for more information:

ACTION - Petition for Group B Strep Testing

Please check out the petition asking the Prime Minister to offer all pregnant women the chance to be tested for group B Strep – if you are a British citizen or resident, please go to <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/GroupB/> to sign and forward the link on to others who may be interested. **The closing date of the petition is 11 March 2009**, so there's not much time left. Nichola Stapleton, who started the petition, said, "I have not been affected by it myself fortunately but I do know people who have been, and have questioned the reasoning in the NHS for not offering a routine test for it. There is news online everyday about babies dying from this ... and the NHS is supposed to be improving?"

National Screening Committee

In November 2008, the UK National Screening Committee held a workshop for stakeholders to consider the most recent evidence on screening pregnant women for carriage of group B Streptococcus. The slides and papers are available online, with comments having been sought by the end of February 2009 for consideration at the NSC policy making meeting on 24 March 2009 – put http://www.nsc.nhs.uk/Library/lib_ind.htm in your browser and scroll down to Group B Streptococcus under Current Consultations. GBSS's comments can be found by clicking [here](#).

GBS Infections on the Increase

GBS infections in babies on the increase in the UK and these infections are also increasing in adults. The Health Protection Agency (and formerly the CDR) reported 421 GBS infections in babies aged 0-90 days in 2008, an increase of 27% since 2003. That's 8 babies a week, up from 6 babies a week ... and this at a time when national prevention guidelines were being implemented. Click [here](#) to view more detail.

ACTION - Slide Presentation

Please check out our new and updated PowerPoint Presentation, "Preventing early-onset group B Streptococcal infection in newborn babies." It's aimed primarily at health professionals, although many of our non-medical members and supporters may find them interesting. Click [here](#).

ACTION - Please complete our surveys at

www.gbss.org.uk/survey.php?section_id=11§ion=surveys (if you haven't already)

ACTION - Experience of Legal Action Register - Would you help us help families considering legal action relating to GBS infection?

From time to time, the charity is approached by families considering whether to take legal proceedings for damages arising from their baby's GBS infection and/or subsequent treatment. The decision to sue or not to sue is complex - the stress of conducting proceedings is

considerable and, in cases where there is no clear evidence of negligence on the part of the medical teams, the legal case may fail. This can be particularly hard to take on top of the stresses of bereavement or caring for a child with long term health problems as a result of GBS. Over the coming months, we'd like to produce a short guidance note on choosing a solicitor and considering bringing a claim since we recognise this may be the right route for some families affected by GBS. If you are or have actively considered suing in respect of either a baby's death or long term disability as a result of GBS infection, then please click [here](#) for more details.

ACTION - Please raise money for charity by searching the web using Everyclick at www.everyclick.com/uk/gbss .

Thank you for your support of Group B Strep Support - we keep the News pages of our website up to date, if you'd like to check out what we think is newsworthy between now and the next e-newsletter. And, if you'd like something specifically to be included in an e-newsletter, then please do let us know.

Kind regards

The GBSS Team


Group B Strep Support

preventing life-threatening group B Strep infection in newborn babies

If you'd prefer not to receive e-mails such as this from us, please just let us know:

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 Web: www.gbss.org.uk

P O Box 203, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1GF

Of, if you would like any leaflets or posters to help raise awareness of group B Strep, please let us know and we'll happily send them to you.