

# Common tests for group B Strep in pregnancy



## Common tests for group B Strep in pregnancy

### Standard 'non-selective' test for group B Strep carriage<sup>1</sup>

- Samples from high vagina or cervix and cultured using non-enriched media
- **Used for:** Investigation of genital tract and associated specimens
- **Pros:** Universal access within NHS; will detect a wide range of pathogens
- **Cons:** Low sensitivity and low specificity for group B Strep

### Enriched culture medium (ECM) test for group B Strep carriage<sup>2</sup>

- Samples from low vagina (no speculum) and rectum, cultured using enrichment media
- **Used for:** Detection of group B Strep carriage
- **Pros:** High sensitivity and high specificity for group B Strep
- **Cons:** Not widely available in NHS; will not detect other pathogens; higher cost than non-selective test (around £11 per test to NHS)

“Optimum yield [of group B Strep] will be achieved by selective/enrichment procedures applied to swabs obtained from the vagina and the anorectum”<sup>1</sup>

### Rapid test for group B Strep carriage

- Samples from low vagina (no speculum) and rectum, processed using immunology assays, DNA hybridisation and PCR methods
- **Used for:** Detection of group B Strep carriage
- **Pros:** Potentially provides results during labour
- **Cons:** Low sensitivity for group B Strep compared with culture; not widely available in NHS; will not detect other pathogens; higher cost than selective and non-selective tests; takes too long or requires complicated procedures<sup>3</sup>

### Urine test<sup>4</sup>

- Samples from mid-stream urine, cultured using standard media
- **Used for:** Detection of group B Strep and other pathogens in the urine; urinary screening programmes of women early in pregnancy
- **Pros:** Detects group B Strep bacteriuria; routinely available within the NHS
- **Cons:** Will only detect group B Strep in the urine, not group B Strep carried in the vagina or rectum



**Group B Strep Support**

Preventing life-threatening group B Strep infection in newborn babies

[www.gbss.org.uk](http://www.gbss.org.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> | UK SMI B 28 Investigation of genital tract and associated specimens  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smi-b-28-investigation-of-genital-tract-and-associated-specimens>

<sup>2</sup> | UK SMI B 58 Processing swabs for group B streptococcal carriage  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smi-b-58-processing-swabs-for-group-b-streptococcal-carriage>

<sup>3</sup> | Honest H, Sharma S, Khan KS. Rapid Tests for Group B Streptococcus Colonization in Laboring Women: A Systematic Review. *Pediatrics* 2006;117:1055-66

<sup>4</sup> | UK SMI B41 Investigation of Urine  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smi-b-41-investigation-of-urine>