

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
**Health, Social Service
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

HSS(MD)7/2013

FOR ACTION

Chief Executives HSC Trusts

(for onward cascade to all relevant staff)

Chief Executive PHA

(for onward cascade to all Public Health Staff)

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)7/2013

Date: 13 March 2013

Dear Colleague

MANDATORY REPORTING OF CONFIRMED CASES OF GROUP B STREPTOCOCCUS (GBS) INFECTION IN BABIES

Action Required

From 1 April 2013 Health and Social Care Trusts are required to report all confirmed cases of early and late onset Group B Streptococcus (GBS) infection in babies to the Public Health Agency.

The Public Health Agency to put in place arrangements for recording and collation of all reports of early and late onset GBS and provide aggregate information on the infection annually.

Introduction

1. Previous information on guidance relating to Group B Streptococcus (GBS) in pregnancy was issued on 13 September 2011 www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hss-md-18-2011.pdf and on 14 August 2012 <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hss-md-37-2012.pdf>. The purpose of this letter is to inform health professionals of the introduction of the mandatory reporting of confirmed cases of Group B Streptococcus (GBS) infection in babies.

GBS Infection

2. Group B Streptococcus is an organism which is carried by around 25% of the population. In the majority of people it causes no harm however around the time of labour and the birth, many babies come into contact with GBS. Most pregnant women who carry GBS have healthy babies though, rarely, GBS infection in newborn babies can cause serious complications and can be life threatening.

Reporting of GBS Infection

3. Currently Streptococcal species infection causing invasive disease in Northern Ireland is reported through routine voluntary laboratory reporting arrangements on the basis of the Health Protection Agency reference guide "Laboratory Reporting to the Health Protection Agency – Guide for Diagnostic Laboratories". Invasive disease is defined as isolation of the organism from blood culture, CSF or other normally sterile body site.

CMO Group B Streptococcus Steering Group

4. A GBS Steering Group, chaired by the CMO, was established by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety in 2011. It includes representatives from the PHA, HSC Trusts, RCOG, RCGP, Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN), Neonatal Intensive Care Outcomes Research and Evaluation (NICORE), Maternity Services Liaison and Community Pharmacy. The Steering Group has agreed an Action Plan with a number of actions falling within three main work areas: Education and Awareness; Surveillance and Notification; Research and Development.
5. The Steering Group has recommended that mandatory reporting of positive cultures of early and late onset GBS infection in babies to the Public Health Agency should be introduced. Minister has accepted this recommendation.

Mandatory Reporting of GBS Infection in Babies

6. From 1 April 2013 Health and Social Care Trusts are required to report all confirmed cases (with positive culture) of early and late onset Group B Streptococcus (GBS) infection in babies up to 90 days of age to the PHA.
7. The PHA has developed a mandatory reporting form for completion by clinicians. A copy of the form is attached at Annex 1 and is also available from the PHA website via the following link.
<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/group-b-streptococcus>
8. Completed forms should be returned by within 5 days of diagnosis to the PHA. The address for return of forms is given on the reporting form.

Yours sincerely



DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer

This letter is available at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

CIRCULATION LIST

Chief Executive HSCB

Chairs of HSC Trusts

Prof Patrick Johnston, Head of School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences, QUB

Mrs Glynis Henry, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for
Nursing and Midwifery

Dr Tom Black, Chair GPS, BMA

Dr Robin Ashe, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Prof Scott Brown, Chair of Northern Ireland Council at the Royal College of General Practitioners

Ms Janice Smyth, Director RCN Northern Ireland

Ms Breedagh Hughes, Director NI RCM Board

Invasive Group B Streptococcus Mandatory Reporting

In babies up to 90 days of age

Please complete and return within 5 days of diagnosis

Infant's Health & Care Number: <small>Or (Infant hospital number if H&C not available)</small>	
DOB:	Sex: M / F
Date of onset:	Age at onset: <small>(in days)</small>
Clinical Details	
Consultant:	Hospital:
Clinician GBS definition: - Early onset (0-6 days from birth) <input type="checkbox"/> - Late onset (7-90 days from birth) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Date specimen taken:	Specimen type: <small>Only sterile site e.g. blood/CSF</small>
Person providing this report: Telephone number: Email: Date of this report:	
Please complete and return to:-	
Ruth Campbell Health Protection Surveillance Officer Public Health Agency 12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS	
or	Email: GBSPHA@hscni.net <small>Note: if emailing the report please password protect and send the password in a separate email.</small>
Tel: 028 9032 1313 (ext: 2483)	

Case definition: *Infants younger than 90 days from whom group B streptococci were isolated from a normally sterile site (e.g. blood or CSF)*