

G Strep Updates: The Continuing Story: Part 2

Since I wrote my first article in 2002, describing my experiences with G Strep in breeding cats and young kittens, I have received an unprecedented quantity of feedback, both from breeders and veterinarians around the world. These were either breeders who had experienced to varying degrees the problems I had witnessed, were interested in the results of treatment or wanted to try it themselves, or from veterinarians who were familiar with these heartbreaking symptoms and events in their own feline patients. Veterinarians confirmed that this phenomenon occurs in virtually every breed and the feedback I received – from the US and other countries confirms to me that G Strep problems are much more widespread than I would have imagined.

Although my initial, radical treatment with dosing all the cats in the house with clindamycin for three weeks produced dramatic, positive results – live litters of kittens, breedings taking successfully, reduced numbers of pyometras and such, I was somewhat disheartened to see that the signs of G Strep had NOT been totally eliminated. Problems started creeping back, little by little and I was at a loss of how to handle this.

Through the feedback I received from veterinarians and the additional research, I am now using an updated, slightly modified protocol, which seems to finally really be working. Since I am gun shy, having seen far too much of the problems this elusive bacteria can cause, I will be treating my own cats for at least the next year, to attempt to control and rid myself of the problem.

Again, I must state that to my observation and through my experience, there are virtually NO SYMPTOMS obvious in the adult cats. No sneezing, coughing, watery/teary eyes or discharge, no diarrhea, no weight loss, no failure to thrive, etc. My breeding cats are and always have been the picture of health – gleaming coats, good weight, etc. That is what has made this problem so very frustrating. In addition to this visual confirmation of good health, every test, every blood panel and even posts on dead kittens have come back inconclusive and normal. The ultimate nightmare!! In any case, because of the dramatically positive results using the clindamycin (and sometimes clindamycin/clavamox) treatment, I have concluded that this IS G Strep I am dealing with.

So...I would like to share with you some ideas and the new protocol I am using with success. This information is based on the advice of several veterinarians I have queried and on my own personal experience. I have tried this new protocol for the past six months or so and am very happy with the results. This will be a clear, non-technical explanation. I hope it will make sense and, more than anything else, I hope it will help others as it has helped me.

First the bad news:

After clindamycin treatment, the G Strep will most likely still be retained in the normal flora *at a very low level*. Therefore, the cat could always be a potential G Strep carrier with respect to breeding only. In other words, we should be concerned with the breeding aspects of the Strep G rather than whether the cats do not have any G Strep at all, since

the clindamycin will most likely not get every last bit of it -- even at a 3 week dose.

The other thing (which you may already know) is that a culture will take about 10 days, and will most likely come back with "normal flora", because the G Strep is at such a low level that it won't "register" on the lab tests.

OK, so if we can't consider the Strep G gone completely, then what to do?

The good news (hopefully) is this:

The key is to treat just before breeding, during breeding, right before delivery of the babies and immediately following the delivery!

The feeling is that the only time the G Strep is really active is when the girls are cycling and at birth/delivery. And the male will also pass on/infect the female or other females afterwards, so it is imperative to treat the boy as well. None of the cats will be symptomatic in any way, as I mentioned. This treatment will kill the G Strep in the girl at this crucial time and also protect the boy.

Before Breeding:

The first day a girl starts calling, give her clindamycin 25mg 2X daily for 3 days. THEN put her with the tom, giving the meds to BOTH cats until she is done cycling, or one week. I leave my girls with the boy until he isn't interested anymore, but however you choose to do it, continue the meds for the whole week.

Before Delivery:

One week before her projected due date, give the clindamycin (antirobe) 25mg 2X daily.

You may or may not also give clavamox. I have given the additional clavamox before with good results in girls that had what I considered pretty severe problems (multiple breedings not taking or absorption of kittens, etc. in spite of giving the antirobe only). In a couple of girls I also gave the clavamox at the beginning, for the breeding. The clavamox is the usual dose, 1cc/ml 2X daily.

Give these meds for the week before birth and also continue for 3-5 days afterwards as the mother can pass on the G Strep to the kittens through grooming.

At Time of Delivery:

As soon as the kittens are born (I do this even before they are dry), dip the cords in iodine and administer long lasting penicillin (injectible – *instructions follow*). You can get the long lasting penicillin without prescription through vet supply houses. Make sure it is "*long lasting penicillin*" ((benzathine/procaine pen G) and NOT Pen G. Be sure to shake the bottle well as the liquid is thick. Give the mother 1cc subQ immediately following the birth.

Give the babies an injection as well using this dilution and method:

Draw up 1.5 cc sterile water or saline into a 3cc syringe. Then draw up .25cc/ml long lasting penicillin. Shake the syringe. Take off the needle. Insert the needle of a 1cc (tuberculin) syringe into the 3cc syringe (where you took off the needle) and draw off

.25cc/ml of this mixture into separate syringes for each kitten. Prepare this solution no more than a couple of hours before the kittens are born (refrigerate). Give each kitten this injection subQ.

Fading Kittens

In the case of fading kittens, I give a "cocktail" of clavamox and liquid clindamycin. For very tiny kittens (up to a week or two, 5 oz. approximately) I would give .1ml of each medication, twice daily. You can either give this with a tube feeding or orally with a syringe. For a kitten of one pound, I would give about .2ml of each.

Additional Tips

A friend gave me a VERY helpful suggestion of how to get those pesky capsules down a very reluctant cat (you know the kind!!)! She simply opens the capsule into a tiny dish, adds a small spoon of baby food and lightly mixes, serves it immediately. Believe it or not, most cats will eat it this way! I guess it isn't all that bad tasting in the powder form.

Although this new protocol seems a bit complicated and time consuming, in actuality, it really isn't that difficult. And the results have been very promising. If you are one who has been experiencing the frustrating and heartbreaking problems of G Strep, I think you will find the time and energy put into following these instructions to be worth every minute.

For comments, feedback and additional questions, please feel free to write to me:
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I do hope this information will help you to have healthy babies – please do let me know!

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