



Rh immune globulin

during pregnancy and after childbirth

Your blood type is Rh negative and you need to have an injection of Rh immune globulin. This information sheet answers some common questions about the Rh factor and the use of Rh immune globulin.

What is the Rh factor?

The Rh factor is a small protein found on red blood cells. Whether you have this protein on your red blood cells or not helps to determine your blood type.

- Most people have the Rh factor on their red blood cells. Their blood type is called Rh positive.
- People who do not have the Rh factor on their red blood cells have Rh negative blood.

The Rh factor does not affect your overall health.

What happens during pregnancy if I am Rh negative?

It is important for your caregivers to know your blood type. If your blood type is Rh negative and the baby's father is Rh positive, your baby's blood type could be either Rh positive or Rh negative.

During pregnancy, a few of the baby's blood cells may mix with your blood. If you and your baby have the same blood type, this mixing will not cause a problem.

If you are Rh negative and the baby is Rh positive, there may be problems when these different types of blood mix. Your body may make antibodies against the baby's Rh factor in your blood. These antibodies will cross over the placenta and destroy some of the baby's blood cells. This may cause mild or serious problems for the baby, such as anemia or bleeding.

How can the baby be protected?

During pregnancy, if you are Rh negative, you will have blood tests to check for antibodies. If no antibodies are found, you will have an injection of Rh immune globulin at about 28 weeks. Rh immune globulin stops your body from making the antibodies that could harm your baby.

What happens when the baby is born?

During delivery, some of the baby's blood cells may mix with your blood. When the baby is born, his or her Rh type will be checked. If your baby's blood is the same type as yours, no special care is needed.

If the baby has Rh positive blood, you will get another injection of Rh immune globulin within 72 hours of the baby's birth. This injection stops your body from making antibodies against the baby's Rh positive cells.

Will I need Rh immune globulin with every pregnancy?

Yes. The protection from Rh immune globulin does not last. If you are Rh negative and you become pregnant again, Rh immune globulin will be given again to protect your baby.

What is Rh immune globulin?

Rh immune globulin is a blood product, made from donated human blood. The brand name for Rh immune globulin is WinRho®.

To reduce the chances of getting an infection from a blood product:

- all blood donors are screened carefully for potential health problems and exposure to certain viruses, including HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) and Hepatitis
- the donated blood is carefully tested
- Rh immune globulin is treated to destroy or remove certain viruses

Your doctor will ask you to sign a consent form before you are given the Rh immune globulin.

What side effects are possible with Rh Immune Globulin?

If you get an injection of Rh immune globulin, you may feel soreness in the muscle where the needle was given. You may also develop a slight fever.