



Rh immune globulin

after a pregnancy

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.

Why is Rh immune globulin given?

Some of the blood from the fetus may mix with your blood when the pregnancy ends. If you both have Rh negative blood, this mixing will not be a problem. There is no test we can do today to determine the Rh factor of the fetus.

If you have Rh negative blood and the fetus has Rh positive blood, mixing of the different blood types may cause a problem. Without treatment, your body may make antibodies against the Rh factor from the fetus' blood. These antibodies stay in your blood and could cause problems for a future pregnancy.

The antibodies would “attack” the red blood cells of another fetus, if that fetus has Rh positive blood. This may cause mild or serious problems for the fetus, such as anemia or bleeding. This is called Rh haemolytic disease.

Treatment with Rh immune globulin may prevent your body from making these antibodies and protect your future pregnancies.

What is Rh immune globulin?

Rh immune globulin is a blood product. It is 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

When is Rh Immune Globulin given?

Rh Immune Globulin must be given within 72 hours after a woman with Rh negative blood has had a pregnancy end in miscarriage, abortion, ectopic pregnancy or after giving birth.

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

You will be given Rh immune globulin before you go home from the hospital. Rh immune globulin is given by a needle into a muscle or into your intravenous.

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.