

What should be done to protect my baby?

All Rhesus D Negative mothers should have a blood test taken from the umbilical cord of the baby following delivery. If the baby's blood group is Rhesus D Positive then the mother will be given an Anti-D injection as soon as is possible after the delivery. This is called Postnatal Prophylaxis. The Anti-D injection should be given within 72 hours of the delivery of the baby. You will also need an injection of Anti-D at other times during the course of your pregnancy such as following a vaginal bleed or an accident involving trauma to the abdomen.

Giving this injection within a period of 72 hours the Anti-D will destroy any of the baby's red cells that have leaked into the mother's bloodstream. Because the baby's red blood cells are destroyed so quickly by Anti-D the mother's defence system is not given a chance to make antibodies which would be stored for a future pregnancy.

If you are pregnant and are Rhesus D Negative you will be offered a single injection of Anti-D at 28 - 30 weeks of your pregnancy. This is to prevent your body forming antibodies which may injure your baby or babies during future pregnancies. These antibodies may form should a "silent bleed" (bleeding without signs or symptoms), occur during the final trimester of your pregnancy. This is called RAADP (Routine Antenatal Anti-D Prophylaxis).

It would be helpful for you to discuss this with your midwife, obstetrician or other involved healthcare professional. If there were occasions when you had to receive Anti-D during your pregnancy because of vaginal bleeding or an accident, you will still be offered an injection of Anti-D at 28 - 30 weeks of your pregnancy.

In this way problems in future pregnancies are avoided. The Anti-D that has been injected into the mother is removed by her body over three months.

What is Anti-D?

Anti-D is an immunoglobulin/protein that is produced from human plasma. Plasma is the fluid part of blood which is separated from blood donations. The Anti-D immunoglobulin /protein is taken from the plasma and prepared so it can be given by injection.

Is the Anti-D harmful to my baby?

Anti-D given to a mother during pregnancy does not harm the baby in any way.

Is the injected Anti-D safe?

Anti-D used in Ireland today is generally safe and rarely causes any adverse events to the mother or child. Adverse events tend to be mild and require no treatment. Occasionally there may be pain and tenderness at the site where the injection was administered. Occasionally the injection of Anti-D causes an allergic response in the mother but these are very rare.

Anti-D is made from the plasma of human blood which is collected from carefully selected donors. The manufacturing process for Anti-D immunoglobulin is very strictly controlled to ensure that known infective agents are removed or killed during the manufacture.

Summary

If your blood group is Rhesus D Negative you will need Anti-D immunoglobulin injections. The occasions that your doctor or midwife may give you Anti-D immunoglobulin are:-

1. When you are 28 - 30 weeks pregnant - Routine Antenatal Anti-D Prophylaxis (RAADP)
2. Should you have any unexpected vaginal bleeding or abdominal trauma during your pregnancy. (Antenatal Anti-D Prophylaxis)
3. Following the delivery of your baby if your baby is Rhesus D Positive (Postnatal Anti-D Prophylaxis).



What should I do?

Remember:

If you have an

Accident

If you are involved in a minor car accident during your pregnancy or have a bad fall

OR

Bleeding

If you have vaginal bleeding during your pregnancy

CONTACT

**your
Maternity Hospital**

Prompt treatment with Anti-D will prevent you developing antibodies. This may be important for the health of your baby during this pregnancy and in future pregnancies.

You may find it helpful to discuss this leaflet with your doctor or midwife at your next visit to the clinic or surgery.

This leaflet is supplied by:

Fannin House, South County Business Park,
Leopardstown, Dublin 18.
Tel: +353 1 290 7000
Fax: +353 1 290 7111
Email: info@fannin.eu
www.fannin.eu



IE2017/035/00

Date of preparation is June 2017.
HV-RAADPL-F Rev 1

Rhesus Negative what it means

This leaflet contains important information which may affect your pregnancy. Please read it very carefully.

When a pregnant woman first goes to her doctor or clinic, a blood sample is taken and tested to see what blood group she is and if that blood group is:

RHESUS D POSITIVE
OR
RHESUS D NEGATIVE

What is Rhesus?

Rhesus is the name given to a structure, made of protein, on the surface of red blood cells.

This structure is present on everyone's red cells, but it is not identical in everyone. In the same way that some people have blue eyes and some have brown eyes, there are two main types of rhesus structure.

The more common type is called **Rhesus D Positive**.

The other type is called **Rhesus D Negative**

About 1 in 6 people are Rhesus D Negative

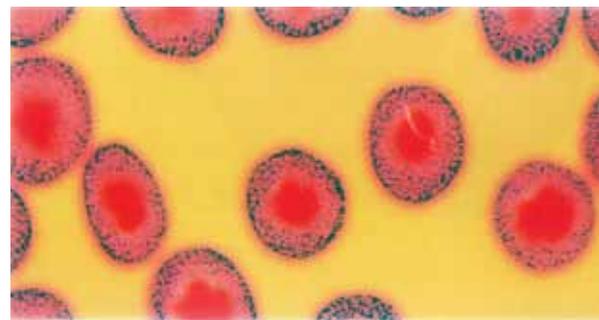
Your blood test shows that you are Rhesus D Negative.

What does being Rhesus D Negative mean for my baby and me?

Being Rhesus D Negative is not an illness or disease. It simply describes what type of blood you have. Just as brown eyes see as well as blue eyes, Rhesus D Negative blood cells work as well as Rhesus D Positive ones. Your rhesus type only matters to you when you are pregnant.

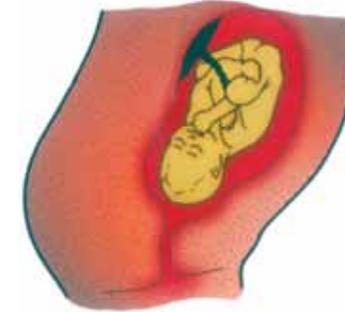
If your partner is Rhesus D Positive, your baby can inherit the father's Rhesus D Positive blood type, in just the same way as babies inherit eye colour or hair colour.

For your first Rhesus D Positive baby, there is usually no problem, and the pregnancy and birth proceed normally. However, during any pregnancy small amounts of the baby's blood can escape across the placenta into the mother's bloodstream. This can happen if you have a vaginal bleed, or a bad fall, or if you are involved in a car accident. It is especially common at the birth of your baby or after a miscarriage. Your body can react to the Rhesus D Positive blood cells from your baby and create antibodies that can damage the blood cells of your Rhesus D Positive baby.

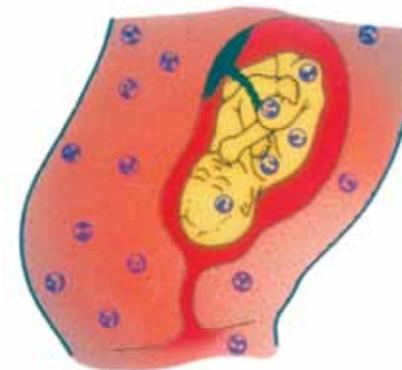


Normal red blood cells magnified 3000 times. Rhesus D Positive and Rhesus D Negative blood cells look alike under the microscope, but the human body can tell the difference.

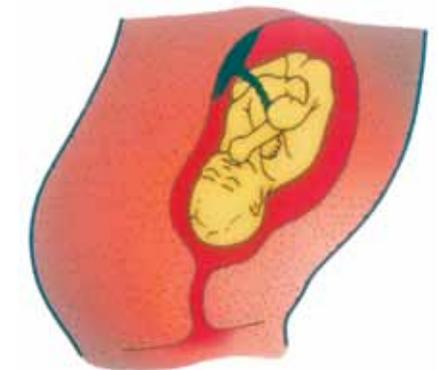
How a Rhesus type can affect your baby during Pregnancy



During any pregnancy, small amounts of the baby's blood can cross into the mother's bloodstream, especially at the time of birth, or if there is vaginal bleeding, or if you have a bad fall or are involved in a car accident.



The mother may form antibodies against the Rhesus D Positive red blood cells. The **mother's** antibodies can damage the **baby's** blood cells in this pregnancy or future pregnancies.



An injection of Anti-D given to the mother rapidly clears the Rhesus D Positive cells from her bloodstream before her body can make antibodies to the babies Rhesus D Positive blood cells, so the baby is protected during this pregnancy and in future pregnancies.

**Antibodies are part of the body's natural defence system. The body makes them to remove unfamiliar things from the bloodstream.*