

Emergency Department Anti-D Immunoglobulin

General Information

Everyone has a blood type, and that blood type is either Rh-positive, or Rh-negative. Rh(D) is a type of protein that can be found on red blood cells. For those of us who are Rh-positive, our red blood cells carry this particular protein. Those who are Rh-negative lack this protein. If an Rh-negative woman has a partner who is Rh-positive (or has an unknown blood type) there is the potential that her baby could have Rh-positive blood. When the baby has Rh-positive blood, a problem can arise that could affect the pregnancy, the health of the baby, or future pregnancies. If an Rh-negative mother's blood becomes mixed with an Rh-positive baby's blood, the mother's immune system may make new proteins called antibodies to defend her body from this unfamiliar protein. Antibodies are intended to protect the mother from substances that are foreign to her body. The Rh(D) protein would be considered foreign to someone's body if it isn't already part of their circulatory system.

These potential complications are treated by giving Rh-negative women the anti-D immunoglobulin, it works by preventing the mother's body from creating antibodies to the Rh(D) proteins. Mothers routinely receive a dose during their third trimester if they are Rh-negative and their partner is known to be Rh-positive, or has an unknown blood type. An additional dose may also be given after delivery of an Rh-positive infant. Mothers may also receive a dose for the following reasons:

- Bleeding during pregnancy
- For procedures during pregnancy, including amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling
- Miscarriage
- Abortion
- Ectopic pregnancy

Mothers who are Rh-negative will need to receive the anti-D immunoglobulin during each pregnancy, as long as they don't have antibodies for the Rh(D) protein in their blood.

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Instructions

1. Follow up with your family doctor or specialty clinic as instructed by the Emergency Physician.
2. If you have recently received a vaccination (within the last 3 months) discuss this with your family doctor, as the immunoglobulin may decrease the effectiveness of vaccinations and you may need to receive them again.
3. If you are currently breast-feeding, discuss this with your family doctor or the Emergency Physician before continuing.
4. If you require testing to monitor blood sugar, Anti-D Immunoglobulin may cause increased blood glucose readings for up to 9 weeks. Discuss this with your family doctor or specialty provider as they can order different testing to be completed which will show accurate blood glucose results.

Return to Emergency if any of the following develop:

- You experience problems breathing, or swelling of the face, mouth, throat or tongue.

For more information or questions contact HealthLinkBC at 811.

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