BC EMERGENCY MEDICINE NETWORK

This material has been reviewed and approved by the patient partners with the Patient Voices Network.

Anti-D Immunoglobulin [RH(D)]

Rh(D) is a type of protein that can be found on red blood cells. Everyone has a blood type that is either Rh-positive, or Rh-negative. For those of us who are Rh-positive, our red blood cells carry the Rh(D) protein.

Those who are Rh-negative lack the Rh(D) 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 [Rh(D)]. 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 [Rh(D)] during each pregnancy, as long as they don't have antibodies for the Rh(D) protein in their blood.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF AT HOME

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

WHEN TO GET HELP

Go to the nearest Emergency Department if you are experiencing any of the following:

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

TO LEARN MORE ASK

+ Your family doctor.
+ HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP

☐ Follow up with your primary care provider in ____ days.

Find this information sheet on the BC Emergency Medicine Network website: www.bcemn.ca/clinical_resource/anti-d-immunoglobulin/