



Women's Health: Anti-D your questions answered

Anti-D what is it all about?

15% of women have a rhesus negative blood group and is it assumed that your unborn baby has/had a positive blood group. In your first pregnancy this is not a problem as there is a natural barrier between mother and baby's blood. However, when the placenta separates from the wall of the womb at birth, during miscarriage or during the course of the pregnancy following trauma, it is possible for a backflow of blood to occur forcing some of the baby's blood cells into the circulation of the mother.

This in turn can lead to the mother producing antibodies against the baby's blood cells (you can liken this to an Allergy). This situation can be prevented by giving the mother an injection known as Human Anti-D Immunoglobulin (Anti-D for short).

How do I know if I need the injection?

We routinely test your blood to find out your blood group and Rhesus factor. You may be rhesus positive or rhesus negative. Rhesus negative mothers need the injection when they have any bleeding at or after 12 weeks of pregnancy. If you need to have an operation (for miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy), or medical management of a miscarriage you will need to have the injection at any time in the pregnancy.

What happens if I miss the injection?

Sometimes if the bleeding is slight, no problem may result. However, occasionally the antibodies produced by the mother will try to destroy the blood cells of any future baby. This can lead to jaundice or a problem which means your baby's blood cannot carry enough oxygen.

How dangerous would these problems be to my baby?

Although these problems are controllable they would require a careful check on you in all future pregnancies.

It may mean your baby would need an exchange blood transfusion.

Will one injection cover all my pregnancies?

No, you need injections with each pregnancy at specific weeks and sometimes more than one during a pregnancy if you have frequent bleeds.



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Possible side effects of Anti-D

Side effects are very rare but can include dizziness, swelling of the face, headache, Feeling cold, shaking, feeling or being sick, joint pains and mouth ulcers.

As with all injections into a muscle there may be some short term discomfort at the site of the injection, very rarely a hardened area may develop where the injection was given.

Contact Information

If you have any further questions please call the Early Pregnancy / Emergency Gynaecology Unit Beech Ward 01793 605257

Smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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