Anti-D Prophylaxis for Pregnant RhD Negative Women

Issued by The Maternity Department
This leaflet is to provide you with information if you have a Rhesus Negative blood group.

**What does RhD negative mean?**

The Rhesus factor is found on the surface of red blood cells. Whether you are RhD negative or RhD positive is inherited from your birth parents. If you are RhD positive, you will have the D antigen attached to your red blood cells. If you are RhD negative you will not have the D antigen.

**Why does being RhD negative matter in pregnancy?**

RhD status matters if a woman who is RhD negative becomes pregnant with a baby who is RhD positive. We are unable to determine a baby’s blood group until it is born. If at any time in your pregnancy your baby’s blood crossed into your circulation, you may produce antibodies. This could occur if your baby has RhD positive blood. This does not usually become a problem in your first pregnancy but in later pregnancies any antibodies in the mother’s blood can cross into the placenta and attack the blood cells of a RhD positive unborn baby. This condition is know as Haemolytic Disease of the Newborn (HDN).
Reasons why your baby’s blood may cross over into your blood

- Miscarriage
- Termination
- Any vaginal bleeding
- Chorionic Villus sampling
- Amniocentesis
- External cephalic version (event performed by the hospital doctor to try and turn the unborn baby from breech to head down)
- Accident or injury to the abdomen e.g. seat belt injury or a fall
- Birth of your baby and placenta

These are all usually obvious but sometimes a baby’s blood can get into the mother’s circulation for no obvious reason. In these cases, antibodies can form without any warning.

What is anti-D prophylaxis?

Prophylaxis is the word given to a medicine that is used to prevent something happening. Anti-D prophylaxis means giving anti-D immunoglobulin to prevent you producing antibodies against RhD positive blood cells. Anti-D immunoglobulin is made from blood plasma from screened donors from the USA. The possibility of infection from using medicines made from human blood plasma cannot be totally ruled out. Several different steps have been taken to make this possibility very unlikely. These include the careful selection of donors and the careful testing of the plasma they provide as well as solvent/detergent treatment to destroy certain viruses.
Benefits of routine Ante Natal Anti-D prophylaxis

We can reduce the chances of you producing antibodies by giving you one injection of anti-D in your pregnancy between 28 weeks and 30 weeks.

Risks of Anti D prophylaxis

- Short term discomfort on site of injection.
- Localised/generalised allergic reaction
- Infection from human blood plasma cannot be totally ruled out however we believe that the benefits outweigh the risks of anti-D. The risk of a known virus being passed from the donor to the person receiving the anti-D is very low – it has been estimated to be 1:10,000 million doses.

Routine Post Natal Anti D

After the birth a blood sample from your baby’s cord will be taken to see what blood group your baby is. If it is RhD positive then you will need a further injection of anti-D immunoglobulin to minimise the risks of problems in your next pregnancy.

If your baby is RhD negative, like you, no further action required.

Alternatives

There are currently no alternatives to anti-D immunoglobulin.
What if I need further information?

For further information, please contact your community midwife or ask to talk to a hospital doctor.

You may also talk to one of our transfusion practitioners.

Telephone 03 44 811 8111 Ext. 2370 or Ext. 3817

Contact Numbers

The Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (Ward 16)
Northumbria Way
Cramlington
NE23 6NZ
0191 60 72016

North Tyneside Pregnancy Assessment Unit
Rake Lane
North Shields
NE29 8NH
0191 293 4209

Wansbeck Pregnancy Assessment Unit
Woodhorn Lane
Ashington
NE63 9JJ
01670 564 192

Hexham Midwifery Led Unit
Corbridge Road
Hexham
NE46 1QJ
01434 655 352

Hillcrest Midwifery Led Unit
Infirmary Drive
Alnwick
NE66 2NS
01665 626 732

Berwick Midwifery Led Unit
High Green
Berwick-upon-Tweed
TD15 1LT
01289 356 622
Alternative Formats
If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices
www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)
www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
Freephone: 0800 032 0202
Text: 01670 511098
Email: northoftyepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111
www.northumbria.nhs.uk

PIN 467/V4

Review date: June 2017
© This material is the copyright of the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust