

Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Anti-D immunoglobulin after birth

After giving birth, a sample of your baby's blood will be taken from the umbilical cord. This blood will be tested to find out which blood group your baby is.

If you are RhD negative and your baby is RhD positive, you may be given an injection of anti-D immunoglobulin. You will be offered this injection within 72 hours of giving birth.

Many mothers choose to be transferred to the care of the community midwife before the results of the blood test on the cord are available. If this is the case, the midwife from ward 25 will contact you to request that you return to the ward for the anti-D injection.

The injection will destroy any RhD positive blood cells that may have crossed over the placenta into your bloodstream while giving birth. If the baby's blood and your blood mix, your body may make antibodies. If antibodies are made and you become pregnant again, the antibodies will attack the baby's red blood cells.

Receiving anti-D within 72 hours of your baby's birth means your blood won't have a chance to produce antibodies and will significantly decrease the risk of your next baby having rhesus disease.

Rhesus disease is a condition where antibodies in the mother's blood destroy her baby's red blood cells. This condition is known as Haemolytic Disease of the Foetus and Newborn (HDFN). HDFN does not harm the mother but may cause the baby to develop jaundice and become anaemic.



Patient Information

Treatment

Treatment for rhesus disease after delivery can include a light treatment called phototherapy, blood transfusions, and an injection of a solution of antibodies (intravenous immunoglobulin) which prevent red blood cells being destroyed.

If rhesus disease is left untreated, severe cases can lead to stillbirth in subsequent pregnancies. It could also lead to brain damage, learning difficulties, deafness, and blindness. However, treatment is usually effective, and these problems are uncommon.

If you are contacted by a midwife requesting you attend for the anti-D injection, please attend as soon as possible, ideally within 72 hours following the birth of your baby. Before leaving the ward, please ensure we have an up-to-date contact number.

Further information

If you require further information, please contact your midwife. Further information can also be found at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/Rhesus-disease/

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact your midwife and they will do their best to meet your needs.

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Patient Information

Document History

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