

Maternity

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 within 3 days 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 you choose to do this, a midwife will call and ask you to come 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 will not 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 not treated, severe cases can lead to stillbirth in later pregnancies. It could also lead to brain damage, learning difficulties, deafness, and blindness. However, treatment is usually effective, and these problems are rare.

If your midwife asks you to come for the anti-D injection, please do this as soon as possible, ideally within 3 days of the birth of your baby. Before leaving the ward, please make sure we have an up-to-date contact number.

More information

If you need more information, please contact your midwife. or go to the website: 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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