

## **RHESUS NEGATIVE WOMEN - PATIENT INFORMATION**

If your blood group happens to be Rhesus negative, then you are at an increased risk of developing blood group incompatibility with your baby during the pregnancy. In fact, sometimes serious incompatibility can cause your baby to become anaemic which has the potential to be life threatening. This can almost completely be avoided by immunising you against the development of this problem. The immunisation is called Anti-D. Anti-D will inactivate fetal red blood cells should they spill into your blood circulation (not an uncommon event) and prevent your body from producing very powerful antibodies that can cross the placenta and harm the baby's red blood cells. The recommended policy throughout Australia is to administer this injection at certain times during your pregnancy. It is routinely given at 28 and 34 weeks and just after delivery. In addition, it is given if you have bleeding for any reason during your pregnancy or certain procedures such as amniocentesis.

As with any medical intervention, there is always a small chance of side effects. These essentially relate to you. Allergic reactions can occur as could transfer of infectious diseases. There has never been a documented case of transmission of infectious disease such as Hepatitis B or C or HIV in Australia. This is in part because unlike the blood used in blood transfusions, these blood products go through different processing.

If the father of your baby has written documentation of also having type Rhesus negative blood, then the above Anti-D injections are not necessary.

The standard protocol is to perform your routine 28 week blood tests prior to your 28 week visit (i.e. 3 days to 1 week before). Please call my rooms to check that you have not developed any antibodies. **You must only have your first Anti-D injection after this has been checked.**

DR ADAM GUBBAY

(REVISED OCTOBER 2014)