

This handout will address some of the frequently asked questions about Rh Immune globulin or WinRho®. Please discuss any questions or concerns you may have with your healthcare provider or nurse.

What is the Rh factor?

- Rh is one of the many inherited blood factors present on red blood cells.
- Rh Positive people have the Rh factor while Rh Negative people do not.

What does it mean to be Rh negative?

- People who are Rh Negative are at risk of developing an antibody against the Rh factor if they are exposed to Rh Positive red blood cells.
- There are two main situations when an Rh Negative person can be at risk of being exposed to Rh factor from the red blood cells of an Rh Positive person:
 - **Pregnancy:** When an Rh Negative mother is pregnant with an Rh Positive baby, some of the baby's red blood cells may get into the mother's blood circulation. Certain situations that increase this risk include undergoing an amniocentesis procedure, trauma to a pregnant woman, situations of pregnancy loss (miscarriage or abortion), and normal childbirth.
 - **Platelet transfusion:** When an Rh Negative patient receives a transfusion of platelets from an Rh Positive blood donor there may be a very small amount of red blood cells within that platelet unit.
- After exposure of an Rh Negative person to Rh Positive red blood cells, it is possible for the Rh Negative person to develop an antibody to the Rh blood factor.
- In women of childbearing potential, forming an Rh factor antibody may cause problems with future pregnancies by harming the baby. The Rh factor antibody may cross the placenta to enter baby's circulation and cause breakdown of the baby's Rh Positive red cells. This kind of a complication from an Rh antibody is called 'Rh Disease', and causes hemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn (HDFN).

What can be done to prevent an Rh factor antibody from forming?

- If Rh antibodies are not already present in the blood, it is possible to prevent Rh Disease by giving Rh Immune Globulin (WinRho®).
- WinRho® is made from human blood donor proteins and is a type of plasma protein product.
- WinRho® is injected into the muscle with a needle or into a vein through an intravenous line.
- The WinRho® antibody works by destroying the Rh Positive red cells that have been transferred from the baby's circulation to the mother's circulation, or which are infused during a platelet transfusion.
- **Rh Negative mothers:**
 - WinRho® would be given to Rh Negative mothers who do not have the Rh antibody and who are:
 - Within 72 hours following a trauma, or situation of pregnancy loss (miscarriage or abortion).

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- Within 72 hours following any attempt to take fluid samples from the uterus.
 - At 28 weeks gestation.
 - Within 72 hours following delivery of an Rh Positive baby.
- **Rh Negative recipients of Rh Positive platelets:**
 - WinRho® may be given to Rh Negative patients within 72 hours of platelet infusion, and who do not have the Rh antibody.

What are common signs and symptoms of a reaction from WinRho®?

- It is common to experience muscle soreness or stiffness if WinRho® is injected into the muscle.
- Less commonly, side effects of receiving WinRho® include a mild headache, mild fever, chills or nausea.
- Serious side effects are extremely rare. An example would be a severe allergic reaction, with a rash covering most of your body or life threatening swelling and difficulty breathing.
- If **any** of the following symptoms occur within 6 hours after receiving WinRho®, please contact your health care provider **immediately**:
 - Fever over 38°C
 - Weakness, dizziness from low blood pressure
 - Fast heart rate
 - Chills
 - Itching , rash or hives
 - Shortness of breath

If you have any other questions about being Rh Negative and receiving WinRho®, please ask your health care provider.