

**UNDERSTANDING SENSITIZATION PREVENTION**

# Rh Factor and Rh Immune Globulin

A plain-language guide to Rh incompatibility, antibody formation, testing, and Rh immune globulin decisions.

**Public education only. This guide is not a diagnosis, medical order, emergency service, or substitute for individualized consent and clinical assessment.**

## What Rh factor means

- Rh factor is a protein that may be present on red blood cells. A person is described as Rh positive when the protein is present and Rh negative when it is absent.
- If an Rh-negative pregnant person is carrying an Rh-positive fetus, fetal blood entering the maternal bloodstream can lead to antibody formation, called sensitization.

## Why sensitization matters

- Rh antibodies can cross the placenta in a current or later pregnancy and damage fetal red blood cells, potentially causing anemia and other serious complications.
- An antibody screen helps determine whether sensitization has already occurred.

## What Rh immune globulin does

- Rh immune globulin, often known by the brand name RhoGAM, helps prevent an unsensitized Rh-negative person from forming Rh antibodies after possible exposure to Rh-positive blood.
- It may be offered during pregnancy, after birth when the newborn is Rh positive, and after events such as bleeding, abdominal trauma, pregnancy loss, or certain procedures. Timing and dose depend on the situation.

## Questions to discuss

- What are my blood type, Rh factor, and antibody screen results?
- Is the baby's Rh type known or likely to be positive?
- What are the expected benefits, side effects, ingredients, and alternatives?
- When would a dose be recommended in my specific situation, and who will administer it?

**Important: This is an educational summary, not a medication order or consent form. Rh immune globulin decisions require individualized review of test results and clinical events.**

## Further reading

- [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists - The Rh Factor](#)



## Questions for your next visit

Use the space below to write questions, preferences, or details you want to discuss privately with your care team.

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