



“WinRho”
The Rh Factor
and Pregnancy

*Leading, Learning,
Caring For You*

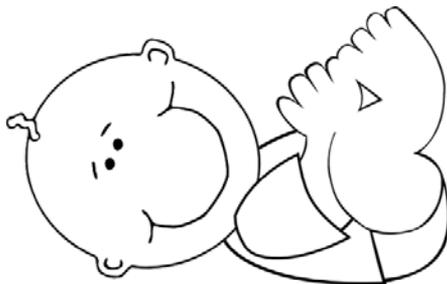
What is Rh Immune Globulin?

Rh immune globulin, also called Rhogam or “WinRho”, is a blood product given to Rh negative women at 28 weeks pregnancy and the first day post partum if your baby is Rh positive. A sample of your baby’s blood will be taken from the cord at delivery to determine their blood type. If your baby’s father is Rh negative also, please advise your doctor. You will not require the injection.

Rhogam or WinRho is a blood product that is screened for viruses as are all blood products. It has been used in Canada since 1968.

What does it mean to be Rh negative?

The Rh factor is a red blood cell protein. Those who have the protein are Rh positive and those who don’t are Rh negative. When an Rh negative woman is pregnant, her baby can be Rh positive if the father is Rh positive. There is a 15% chance that you are Rh negative. Being Rh negative has no effect o your health, but can cause problems for your baby or future babies if you are not treated with Rhogam.



How does being Rh negative affect pregnancy?

During the pregnancy, some of the baby's blood may mix with the mother's blood; as a result her body can react to the Rh protein and make antibodies to destroy it. The antibodies will not hurt the mother but can cross the placenta and break down the baby's RH positive blood cells. Future babies are more at risk because mom's body remembers how to make antibodies. If the next baby is Rh positive, he or she is at risk of developing a severe condition called hemolytic disease of the newborn (HDN). HDN can cause:

- **low hemoglobin (anemia)**
- **severe jaundice**
- **brain damage**
- **death**

The risk increases with each pregnancy. HDN can be prevented in 99.9% of Rh negative women with injections of Rhogam or WinRho.

Most people have no side effects. Rarely it can cause:

- **pain at the injection site**
- **fever**
- **malaise**
- **headache**
- **an allergic reaction**

**Adapted from Nova Scotia Health Authority and
albertahealthservices.ca**

Postpartum Parent Support Program