

Blood Grouping for Pregnant Women

What are the main blood groups?

The two main ways to classify blood groups are the ABO system and the Rhesus system, together they make up the 8 main blood groups.

The four different blood groups are:

A, B, AB and O.

When a person needs a blood transfusion it is important that the donor's blood group matches their particular blood group.

Your blood type is called the RH type and is either positive or negative. If you are negative you will experience a severe immune system reaction if RH positive blood gets into you your stream. This can happen during pregnancy, if the baby has a blood type of Rh positive and your blood is negative. If blood cells travel across the placenta, your immune system will make antibodies to tell the Rh positive blood cells.

If you later conceive another Rh positive baby the immune system will flood the fetus with antibodies and will destroy the baby's red blood cells, if left untreated it can cause severe anaemia, this is called Haemolytic Disease of the Newborn (HDN). This condition is now rare as mothers receive an immunoglobulin throughout pregnancy and if needed within 72 hours of birth.

This can be easily avoided by administering Anti D when you are 28 and 34 weeks pregnant and 72 hours postnatally via an Intramuscular injection. This suppresses the response.

Anti D is derived from human plasma. It is also important if you have a vaginal bleed throughout your pregnancy that you inform your health care provider.



According to the Australian Red Cross Blood Service the percentage of blood group frequency in Australia is:

O Positive	40%
O Negative	9%
A Positive	31%
A Negative	7%
B Positive	8%
B Negative	2%
AB Positive	2%
AB Negative	1%

Prepared by Kellee's Kards for Midwifery Matters
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