

About Rh blood groups (types)

The Rh factor is the name given to a blood group protein, Rh (D), which is attached to red blood cells. Only a portion of the population has this protein on their red blood cells.

On average, of every 100 people:

- 83 will have the Rh factor; their blood type is called “Rh (D) positive”
- 17 will not have the Rh factor; their blood type is called “Rh (D) negative”

The Rh factor will not affect a pregnancy if:

- The mother is Rh (D) positive and her baby is Rh (D) negative
- The mother is Rh (D) positive and her baby is also Rh (D) positive
- The mother is Rh (D) negative and her baby is also Rh (D) negative

Meet Alison and her daughter Rose.

Alison received vital treatment during her pregnancy thanks to Australia's generous blood donors.

Anti-D donors

Helping to save the lives of babies

Meet Rose. Rose was born healthy thanks to the Anti-D injections her mum received when pregnant.

For further information call the Anti-D Coordinator in your state or territory, on **13 14 95** or visit donateblood.com.au/all-about-blood/different-donation-types/anti-d

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 **Australian Red Cross**
BLOOD SERVICE

Haemolytic Disease of the Newborn, or HDN, could potentially affect the babies of up to 17% of mothers, causing serious complications and, in some cases, death.

It can be prevented.

What is HDN?

A baby's blood type is jointly inherited from its parents. For this reason, a mother and her baby may have different blood types. Usually, this is not a problem.

Problems can occur when a mother has Rh (D) negative blood and her baby is Rh (D) positive. During pregnancy and labour, a small amount of the baby's blood can cross into the mother's bloodstream.

When this happens, the mother's immune system can produce antibodies, called Anti-D, that could destroy her baby's Rh (D) positive red blood cells. This is known as HDN.

If these antibodies develop, they do not normally affect the first Rh (D) positive baby. However, the immune system has a good memory and can rapidly produce high levels of these antibodies in a future pregnancy.

This may lead to serious complications, such as severe anaemia, brain damage, and in some cases, the baby's death.

