

ABO Group and Rh Blood Type

This information is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to diagnosis, treat, cure, or prevent disease. Abnormal test values falling outside the Normal Range will be printed in bold and noted in the “Flag” column. Abnormal values should be reviewed by your primary physician and a copy of all testing should be included in your medical record for future reference and comparison.

The ABO group and Rh type classify a group of genetically inherited antigens found in the outer membrane of each red blood cell. The ABO group consists of four possibilities: A, B, AB, and O. The Rh type is either positive or negative.

Individuals with AB Positive blood are known as universal recipients because they can receive any one of the blood groups or Rh types in a blood transfusion. Persons with group O Negative blood are known as universal donors because their blood can be safely transfused to individuals with any of the other blood groups or Rh types. The emergency transfusion of O Negative blood is often done when there is no time to match the patient’s exact blood group.

Whether one is typed as Rh Negative or Rh Positive is an important consideration in transfusion therapy and during pregnancy. An Rh Negative person can never receive Rh Positive blood. During a transfusion an immune reaction occurs that destroys the transfused Rh positive cells. In an Rh negative mother carrying an Rh positive baby, the baby's red blood cells are destroyed by antibodies produced by the mother's immune system. If a mother-to-be is found to be Rh negative, this dangerous immune response can be prevented with a vaccination during early pregnancy.