Blood transfusions

Worksheet E

Immunoglobulins

These are protective antibodies, generated by your white blood cells, which form when you're recovering from an infection or have received some immunisation. These antibodies, once formed, protect you against future attack of the infection.

Specific immunoglobulins contain specially selected antibodies, chosen to treat a specific infection.

For example, donors who have had chicken pox will have high levels of chicken pox antibodies. So their plasma will be ideal for children with leukaemia who have been exposed to chicken pox, and also to prevent any potentially life-threatening diseases.

And then there's the **anti-D immunoglobulin** which is given to pregnant women.

If an RhD negative woman is pregnant with an RhD positive baby, some of her baby's blood may enter her system during birth. This may cause the mother to produce anti-D (or anti-RhD) antibodies. And if her next baby happens to be RhD positive, the mother's anti-D antibodies will attack her baby's red blood cells. This can be neutralised by giving her an anti-D immunoglobulin injection straight after the birth of her first baby.

From: www.blood.co.uk