



Rubella



What is Rubella?

Rubella virus (also called German measles) is a highly contagious viral disease best known for its distinct red rash. Rubella can easily spread to other people who have never been vaccinated or unvaccinated people who have never had rubella before.

Rubella may cause mild or no symptoms in most people, however it can be quite serious for unborn babies when a pregnant mother becomes sick with rubella.

Rubella has an incubation period of 14-21 days. This means after an exposure, you may not see symptoms for up to 21 days.

How is Rubella Spread?

- Rubella is spread by respiratory droplet route. This means rubella is transmitted by breathing in droplets that are sprayed into the air when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks.
- Rubella can also be spread through direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected individuals.
- Someone infected with rubella can expect to be contagious 7 days before the onset of rash. Contagiousness continues for up to 14 days after the onset of rash.

How is Rubella Treated?

There is no specific treatment for rubella. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, consult your doctor.

Is Rubella Dangerous?

While usually a mild disease, rubella can be very dangerous if a woman becomes infected while she is pregnant. Rubella can cause birth defects such as hearing difficulties, blindness, heart problems, mental retardation, and may also cause miscarriage.

Because of this, all women who plan to have children should have a blood test prior to pregnancy to make sure they are immune to rubella.

How can Rubella be prevented?

Rubella is a vaccine preventable disease.

- Protect your children by having them vaccinated when they are 12-15 months old, and again when they are about to enter kindergarten.
- In the event of an outbreak, unvaccinated children may be recommended to stay home from school and group activities for the duration of the incubation period. This is recommended to prevent further spread.

Symptoms of Rubella:

Rubella is a mild illness which may present with few or no symptoms. Symptoms may include:

- Rash
- Slight fever
- Joint aches
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Reddened eyes
- Swelling of the lymph nodes (often in the back of the neck)

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CDC Public Information

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