

RUBELLA

What is rubella?

Rubella (German Measles) is a relatively mild, three-day illness caused by a virus. However, it is especially dangerous in women infected during the first few months of pregnancy because the virus can severely damage the unborn baby.

What are the symptoms of rubella?

Rubella is usually a mild illness, with a slight fever, swelling of the lymph glands (especially those in the back of the neck) and a rash that lasts for three days. Symptoms usually appear 16 to 18 days after exposure, with a range of 14 to 23 days. Sometimes children do not develop any symptoms, but adults may have a low-grade fever, headache, weakness, runny nose and red eyes. Some people also get temporary swelling and pain in the joints.

How is rubella spread?

Rubella is spread in droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person, usually when a person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread by direct contact with saliva and discharges from the nose and throat of an infected person.

How long are people contagious?

Persons infected with rubella are contagious from about one week before the appearance of the rash through seven days after the appearance of the rash.

Who gets rubella?

Persons who do not receive the rubella vaccine are the most likely to get this disease. Persons who receive two doses of the measles-containing vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella or MMR) are much less likely to be infected.

What treatment is available for people with rubella?

There is no specific treatment for rubella. Supportive care should be given as needed.

Do infected people need to be kept home from school, work or daycare?

People should stay home from work, school, daycare or other settings where others could be exposed until seven days after onset of rash.

How can I protect myself and my family from getting rubella?

- Keep your children up to date on their immunizations.
- Women of child bearing age should be fully immunized and advised to delay becoming pregnant for at least three months following immunization.
- Pregnant females who have contact with a person with rubella during their first few months of pregnancy should have their blood tested for infection or immunity and be given advice by their doctor.
- Both male and female health care workers should be immunized against rubella, unless they can provide evidence of immunization or disease.