

FACT SHEET

Rubella

What is rubella?

Rubella, also known as German Measles, is a contagious disease caused by a virus. The disease most frequently affects school-aged children and young adults. It is most common during late winter and early spring.

Most people who get rubella have a mild illness. However, rubella infection during pregnancy can result in miscarriage, fetal death, or birth defects.

How is it spread?

The virus is spread by direct contact with droplets expelled into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Rubella can also be passed from a mother to her unborn child.

The virus can be transmitted to others seven days before rash onset until seven days after rash onset.

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

What are the symptoms?

Rubella symptoms usually begin 16-18 days after exposure and may include:

- Red rash (starts on face, spreads to rest of body, lasts about 3 days)
- Low-grade fever
- Headache
- Mild pink eye
- Swelling of lymph glands
- Cough
- Runny nose

How is it prevented?

Rubella is a vaccine preventable disease. The best way to protect against Rubella is to be vaccinated. Two doses of MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine is recommended. It is important that women of childbearing age know if they are protected against rubella.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment or cure for rubella. Doctors may recommend medication to control fever and discomfort. Adequate rest and fluid intake can be helpful.

Please note, children with a viral illness should not receive salicylates (such as aspirin) because of the risk of developing Reye syndrome.