



THE FACTS: *Rubella* (German Measles)

What is it?

Rubella, also known as German measles, is an infection caused by a virus. Due to a very good vaccine that prevents most cases, rubella is no longer very common. Children are given this vaccine when they are one year old.

What are the Signs and Symptoms?

Rubella may cause a mild illness with a low fever, swelling of the glands in the neck and behind the ears, and a widespread rash with small red spots. Children usually get a mild form of the infection, so mild that they do not show any signs of illness. The infection may also be very mild in adults, although it can create serious problems for pregnant women. If a woman gets rubella in the first three months of pregnancy there is a very high chance the unborn child will develop serious defects. A blood test is required in order for a doctor to make the diagnosis. There is no medication to cure rubella.

How is it Spread?

The rubella virus is very infectious and spreads easily from person to person through the air. People with rubella can spread it from about a week before the rash starts until one week after the rash first appeared. It takes about 2-3 weeks for a person to get the infection once they have been in contact with an infected person.

Things Parents Can Do

- If your child has been exposed to someone with the infection:
 - and has received the MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine, it is very unlikely that your child will develop rubella.
 - If your child has not been vaccinated and is 1 year of age or older, contact your doctor or the health unit to arrange for vaccination as soon as possible.
- Contact your physician if you are a woman of childbearing age and do not know if you have had rubella vaccine. The physician can tell you if you are immune (vaccinated or have had the infection) by doing a blood test. If you are not immune and not pregnant, the physician will vaccinate you. ***The Rubella vaccine (MMR) should not be given to pregnant women.***
- If your child has rubella, contact your doctor, who may want to arrange vaccinations for others who have been in contact with your child.
- Cases of rubella must not return to school/daycare until at least seven days after the rash first appeared. Pregnant women should not have contact with your child during that period.
- Rubella can be prevented by immunization.

**For Further Information Contact the Infectious Disease Program at 625-8318
or toll free 1-888-294-6630, ext. 8318.**

