



## ...About Rubella (German Measles)

**Just the Facts**  
57-010-0394



Rubella (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 receive this vaccine when they are 15 months old.

Rubella may cause a mild illness with a low fever, swelling of the glands in the neck and behind the ears, and a rash with small red spots.

Rubella spreads from person to person through the air or by touch. People with rubella can spread it from a few days before the rash starts until 5 to 7 days after.

Children usually get a mild form of the infection, so mild that they do not show any sign 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 of the unborn child dying or developing serious defects.

A physician can diagnose rubella by doing a blood test. There is, however, no medication to cure rubella. Antibiotics are ineffective because rubella is caused by a virus.

### THINGS PARENTS CAN DO

- ◆ If you or your child have been in contact with someone with rubella, check immunization records to see if you and your child have had the rubella or the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine.
- ◆ If your child has not been vaccinated and is 1 year of age or older, contact your physician or Preventive Medicine Service to arrange for a vaccination as soon as possible.
- ◆ If you are a woman of child-bearing age and do not know if you have had a rubella vaccine, contact your physician. The physician can tell you if you are immune (vaccinated or have had the disease) by doing a blood test. If you are not immune and not pregnant, the physician will vaccinate you. **The rubella vaccine or the MMR vaccine should not be given to pregnant women.**
- ◆ If your child has rubella, contact your physician, who may want to arrange vaccinations for others who have been in contact with your child.
- ◆ If your child has rubella, he or she should not return to the child care facility until at least 7 days after the rash first appears and until a physician clears your child to return.

**You can prevent rubella by immunization.**

- ◆ **Child Care Facilities**
- ◆ **Information**
- ◆ **Immunization**

For additional information contact your local health consultant or health care provider.

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