

RUBELLA (GERMAN MEASLES) FACT SHEET

What is rubella?

Rubella, caused by the rubella virus, is a disease characterized by mild fever and a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body.

What are the symptoms of rubella?

The symptoms of rubella are rather like a mild cold, starting with a slight fever, sore throat and enlarged lymph glands in the neck and behind the ears, followed by a rash 2 – 3 days later. The rash, which usually lasts about 3 days, first appears on the face and progresses to the trunk and gradually works its way down the body. Congenital rubella, rubella infection passed from pregnant mother to fetus, can result in serious complications such as deafness, cataracts, heart defects, mental retardation, and liver and spleen damage.

How common is rubella?

In unvaccinated populations, rubella is primarily a childhood disease and usually presents with few or no symptoms. In areas where children are fully vaccinated (2 doses), adolescent and adult infections are more common with symptoms of illness experienced over a 5 day period. Rubella occurs more frequently in winter and early spring.

Who can get rubella?

Primarily children who have either not received both doses of Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine or have not previously had rubella. Infection with rubella virus provides protection for life, and the MMR vaccine series provides protection for 95% of recipients.

How is rubella spread?

Rubella is spread by airborne droplets (coughing and sneezing) or by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions from infected people.

Is there treatment for rubella?

There is no effective antiviral treatment for rubella, but parents are encouraged to give children plenty of fluids and pain reliever for fever or joint pain. Aspirin is not recommended to children under 18 years.

How is rubella prevented?

Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR) vaccine is the most effective means of preventing disease. Talk with your health care provider to discuss your immunization needs.

Do I need a rubella vaccine?

All children should be vaccinated with two doses of MMR vaccine. If you are unsure if you need to be vaccinated, see <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/mmr.html>

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/> or <http://www.cdc.gov/rubella/>