

RUBELLA (GERMAN MEASLES)

Reportable to local or state health department

Consult the health department before posting/distributing Parent/Guardian fact sheet.

Rubella (German measles) is a mild illness that may be prevented through vaccination. If a pregnant woman develops rubella, the baby can become infected and develop serious problems known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS). **If a pregnant woman is exposed to rubella, she should call her healthcare provider immediately, particularly if she does not know whether she is immune (has had rubella disease or vaccine in the past).** See pgs 26-27 for more information on rubella and pregnancy.

CAUSE	Rubella virus.
SYMPTOMS	Low-grade fever, swollen glands in the area behind the ears and in the neck, and rash. Rash usually appears first on the face and moves from head to foot. The rash usually lasts 3 days. Adults, especially women, may have sore or swollen joints. This joint pain usually lasts for less than one month. Up to half of all persons have no symptoms. Rarely, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) may occur.
SPREAD	When a person with rubella coughs or sneezes tiny droplets with rubella virus into the air and another person breathes them in. People can also get infected from touching these secretions and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.
INCUBATION	It takes 14 to 21 days, usually 16 to 18 days, from the time a person is exposed until the symptoms begin.
CONTAGIOUS PERIOD	From 7 days before until 5 to 7 days after the rash begins.
EXCLUSION	<u>Childcare</u> and <u>School</u> : Until 7 days after the rash appears. Exclude unvaccinated children and staff for at least 3 weeks after the onset of rash in the last person who developed rubella.
DIAGNOSIS	A blood test for rubella should be done 3 to 5 days after the symptoms begin. Other laboratory specimens may be collected.
TREATMENT	Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider.
PREVENTION/CONTROL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minnesota state law requires that all children 15 months of age or older, in childcare settings or schools be vaccinated against rubella or have a legal exemption. This vaccination is usually combined with measles and mumps (MMR) and given at 12-15 months of age. Two doses or a legal exemption are required for kindergarten and seventh grade enrollment.

PREVENTION/CONTROL (CONTINUED)

- Unvaccinated people who have been exposed to rubella should call their healthcare provider or local public health clinic as soon as possible to be vaccinated.

Encourage parents/guardians to notify the childcare provider or school when their child is vaccinated so their records can be updated.

- Recommend staff stay home if they develop symptoms of rubella. Encourage parents/guardians keep their child home if they develop a rash, fever, and swollen glands behind the ears or neck.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues.
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled. (See pgs 34-36.)
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with secretions from the nose or mouth. **Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.**

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at (612) 543-5230 or call your local health department.