

Rubella *Fact Sheet*



What is rubella?

Rubella, also known as German measles, is a viral rash illness. While typically a mild disease in children, there are serious risks to a developing fetus.

Symptoms

About 25-50% of individuals will not have any symptoms. Symptoms may appear 12-23 days after an exposure.

- **Low-grade fever**
- **Headache**
- **Mild pink eye**
- **General discomfort**
- **A red rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body.** This is typically the first symptom in children. The rash lasts for 3 days.
- Arthritis is a common symptom that women experience

Prevention

Rubella can be prevented with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. One dose of MMR vaccine is 97% effective at preventing rubella. **Rubella is a leading cause of vaccine-preventable birth defects.** Vaccination must take place prior to a pregnancy. **Talk to your doctor about vaccination.**

How is it spread?

The virus spreads through close contact or respiratory droplets from a person with rubella. Rubella is contagious, but less so than measles and chickenpox. **A person with rubella is most contagious when the rash first appears, but may spread the virus from 7 days before the rash to 7 days after the rash appears.**

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for rubella. **Use non-aspirin medications to treat fever in children.** For pregnant women who are infected during the first trimester, up to 85% of infants will be born with a birth defect.

