



RUBELLA

What is rubella?

Rubella or German measles is a very contagious disease caused by the rubella virus.

Who gets rubella?

Rubella is not common in children anymore because most children are immunized by age 12 months. It is not usually a serious disease in children. However, in unprotected pregnant women, it may cause fetal damage with severe consequences.

How is rubella spread?

Rubella is spread when a person breathes in droplets of respiratory secretions from an infected person. It can also be spread through contact with infected saliva.

What are the symptoms of rubella?

The rubella virus causes fever, swollen lymph nodes behind the ears and a rash that begins 14 to 17 days after exposure. The rash first begins on the face and spreads to the torso, arms, and legs. A person can spread the disease from as many as five days before the onset of the rash to five to seven days after.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms appear around 14 days after infection, but the symptoms may be seen as early as 12 days to as late as 23 days after infection.

Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?

Yes, children with postnatal rubella should be excluded from school or childcare for seven days after onset of rash.

What is the treatment for rubella?

There is no specific medicine to treat rubella or make the disease go away faster.

What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of rubella?

Rubella is vaccine preventable. The rubella vaccine is part of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine series given to children at 12 months of age. Immunization of exposed non-pregnant women of childbearing years may be indicated because if the exposure did not result in infection, immunization will protect the person in the future.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/rubella/about/in-the-us.html>

Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology
24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

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