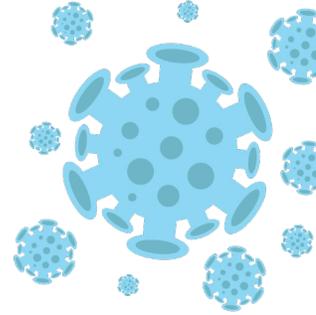


# Rubella Fact Sheet

## What is it?

Rubella is a contagious viral illness that causes a rash and is sometimes called **German measles** or **3-day measles**. Rubella can **cause dangerous complications in babies, young children, and developing babies whose mothers get sick during pregnancy.**



## How does it spread?

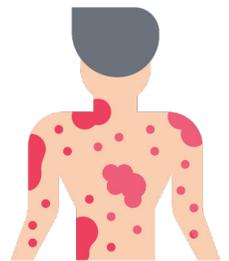
Rubella is spread when a sick person coughs or sneezes, or by direct contact with a sick person's fluid from the nose and mouth. **It can also be spread from a pregnant mother to their developing baby.** A person with rubella may spread it to others up to 1 week before the rash appears and up to 7 days after. **Someone can still spread rubella even if they are not showing signs of being sick.**



## What are the symptoms?

**Signs of rubella may not** show up until 2-3 weeks after exposure to the virus, or there may be no signs at all. When symptoms show up, they can include:

- Rash that starts at the face and spreads throughout the body
- Mild fever (100° F / 37° C)
- Headache
- Red, itchy eyes or Pink Eye
- General discomfort
- Cough, runny nose and sore throat
- Body aches and joint aches, including behind the ears and base of neck



Rubella infection is usually mild in children. However, the effect on a developing baby can be severe. For pregnant women and their developing babies, it can cause serious complications, including **lifelong hearing loss, growth delays for the heart and other organs, and developmental delays.** In some cases, it can cause loss of pregnancy.



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# How can I protect my child?

Rubella can be prevented with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. People who don't get their vaccinations are more likely to get sick with rubella. **The MMR vaccine has been carefully studied by scientists and is both safe and effective.** No studies have found a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.



**Two (2) doses of the MMR vaccine are needed for the most protection.** The first dose is given at age 12-15 months, and the second dose is given at age 4-6 years. Check that your child is up to date on their vaccinations, as **2 doses of the MMR vaccine is up to 97% effective in preventing rubella for life.**

If you are thinking of becoming pregnant, check your vaccination records to make sure you received the MMR vaccine series. If you are pregnant and get sick with rubella, it can seriously impact your developing baby. **Getting vaccinated before getting pregnant can prevent rubella in your developing baby.** If you are planning to get pregnant, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting vaccinated 1 month before getting pregnant.



Although rubella is rare in the United States (U.S.) due to very effective vaccines, it still exists in other parts of the world. **This is important to think about before traveling, if you are pregnant.** If a child requires protection from rubella, before 12 months of age for certain foreign travel, the MMR vaccine can be given as early as 6 months old.

# When should I ask a doctor?

Contact your doctor if your child starts to show signs of rubella, or has been around someone with rubella, or if your sick child seems to be getting sicker instead of getting better. During the exam, the doctor will ask about symptoms and if your child is vaccinated.



If your child does get sick with rubella, it is important to stay home to prevent others from getting sick. There is no treatment for rubella, but in many cases, symptoms can be managed. Your doctor can recommend treatments and remedies for rubella. **Notify close contacts, especially pregnant women and those at work or school, that you are sick with rubella.**



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