



Rubella (German Measles) and Pregnancy

Who is most at risk?

- The Rubella virus causes a mild illness in pregnant mothers but could cause severe problems for a developing baby known as Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS).
- An unborn child is most at risk of developing CRS if the mother is infected with Rubella in the first four months of pregnancy.
- After the 20th week of conception complications from Rubella are rare.

What is Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)

- A series of physical problems that can happen to an unborn child if the mother is infected with Rubella.
- Infants with CRS may be born deaf or blind, may have damage to their hearts or mental disabilities.

How often are babies born with Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)?

- CRS is rare in Ontario. Only 14 cases of CRS were reported to the Ministry of Health from 1990-2004, which is approximately one per year.

How safe are schools during a rubella outbreak?

- Schools are generally well protected because 95 per cent of students have been vaccinated against rubella.
- Public health units are notified when someone is diagnosed with rubella. If that person is a student, all unimmunized students at the school are immediately sent home under the authority of the Immunization of School Pupils Act.
- Once the unimmunized students are removed from school, it's rare to see the virus spread since all remaining students would be immunized.

What should I do if I'm pregnant and live or work in a setting where there has been Rubella?

- Call your doctor. Your doctor can check your immunity to Rubella with a simple blood test.
- This may have already been done as part of your early pregnancy testing.



What can I do to prevent Rubella before pregnancy?

- If you are of child-bearing age but not pregnant, have a blood test to ensure you are immune to Rubella.
- If you are not immune, get your MMR vaccine and wait at least three months before becoming pregnant.

For further information, visit the Haldimand-Norfolk website at www.hnhu.org