



Measles (German Measles, Rubella)

What is it?

- Rubella, commonly known as German measles is caused by a virus.
- Infection that affects the skin and lymph nodes.
- Usually a mild illness, but it can cause severe birth defects if a pregnant woman is infected.
- It is rarely diagnosed in Canada because most people are immunized. Your child is more likely to develop measles if they have not been vaccinated or if they travel to other countries without being vaccinated.

Signs and Symptoms?

Common symptoms of rubella include:

- Slight fever
- Swollen lymph nodes at the back of the neck and behind the ears
- A non-itchy rash consists of tiny pink spots that become paler when pressed
- The rash usually appears after a few days of fever and feeling unwell
- Joint pain is common in adolescent and adult women and usually occurs after the rash and may last for a few weeks

Not all cases of this condition look the same and many conditions can look similar. For information about your child's illness, please speak to your child's doctor.

How does it spread?

- The Rubella virus passes from person to person through coughs, sneezes or touched surfaces.
- Rubella is most contagious a few days before and after the rash appears.

How to decrease the spread?

- Rubella is included in the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Ask your doctor if you or your child are not immune.

Pregnancy and fetal development

- Rubella in pregnancy is now very rare in Canada because most women have been vaccinated against it.
- If a pregnant woman gets rubella during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy, she usually passes the disease on to her unborn baby (fetus). The baby will have congenital rubella.
- If the fetus gets rubella during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, the baby will likely be born with many life-long problems. The most common are eye problems, hearing problems, and damage to the heart and other organs.
- If the fetus gets rubella between 12 and 20 weeks of pregnancy, problems are usually milder
- There are rarely problems if the fetus gets rubella after 20 weeks of pregnancy.
- Babies with congenital rubella are contagious for more than a year. There is no treatment for rubella infection.

Recommended Absence:

- Anyone with rubella must stay away from day care, school and work for at least seven days after the appearance of the rash.

Rubella **must** be reported to the Medical Officer of Health as required by the Health Promotion and Protection Act.

Resources:

About Kids Health

www.aboutkidshealth.ca

Caring for Kids

www.caringforkids.cps.ca

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