

Facts about Rubella (German Measles)

Rubella is a disease caused by the rubella virus.

Rubella is a mild disease in children but can be more serious in teenagers and adults. Rubella is much less common since routine immunization of children against rubella began.

Rubella during pregnancy can result in miscarriage, death of the fetus or severe abnormalities in the baby (congenital rubella syndrome).

After someone catches rubella it can take from 2 to 3 weeks for signs of the disease to appear. Some children with rubella will have no signs of rubella.

The signs of rubella are:

- a red or pink rash that begins on the face and spreads down the body
- swollen glands behind the ears
- slight fever
- pain in the joints

Rubella usually lasts about 3 days.

How is Rubella Spread?

Rubella is spread by contact with droplets coughed, sneezed, or breathed into the air by someone with rubella or by contact with the saliva or discharge from the nose of someone with rubella.

Rubella is catching for seven days before the rash appears and for up to 7 days after the rash first appears.

Rubella is a reportable disease in British Columbia: If there is a case of rubella in a child or adult in the child care centre or school, immediately report the case to the Licensing Officer or Public Health Nurse assigned to your centre or school.



RUBELLA is a vaccine-preventable disease

Rubella vaccine is provided free to healthy children, aged one year and older, as part of routine immunization. It is given in a shot that also includes vaccine against mumps and measles (MMR). MMR vaccine is also provided to older children and adults who have not had rubella or rubella vaccine.



What to Do at Home

- Make sure your child has the MMR vaccine when it is offered as part of routine vaccination.
- If another child has rubella and your child has not had the MMR vaccine, ask your doctor or Public Health Nurse to give your child the vaccine.
- If your child gets rubella, tell the caregivers at the child care centre or school.
- **Talk to your doctor** or Public Health Nurse, if you have any questions about rubella.
- Wash your hands often when looking after a child with rubella and always before preparing and eating food.



Children with rubella should not go to the child care centre or school until at least seven days after the rash appears and only when they feel well enough to take part in activities.

Children who have been in contact with someone with rubella and who have not been immunized against rubella, should not go to the child care centre or school until they are immunized or until the Medical Health Officer says it is safe for them to return.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol™, Tempra™) or ibuprophen (Advil™, Motrin™) may help reduce a fever and provide some comfort. Always follow the directions on the package about how much and how often to take acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Never give products containing ASA (acetylsalicylic acid, such as Aspirin™) to anyone under the age of 20 years. Use of ASA products by children can lead to Reye's syndrome, a serious condition affecting the brain and liver.