

## **RUBELLA (GERMAN MEASLES)**

### **Reportable Disease**

Rubella (German Measles) is a mild illness that may be prevented through vaccination. If a pregnant woman develops rubella, the baby can become infected and develop serious problems known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS). If a pregnant woman is exposed to rubella, she should call her healthcare provider immediately, particularly if she does not know whether she is immune (immune = had rubella disease or vaccine in the past)

#### **CAUSE**

Rubella virus

#### **SYMPTOMS**

Rubella usually causes the following symptoms in children:

- Rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body
- Low fever (less than 101 degrees)

These symptoms last 2 or 3 days.

Older children and adults may also have swollen glands and symptoms like a cold before the rash appears. Aching joints occur in many cases, especially among young women. About half of the people who get rubella do not have symptoms.

Birth defects in the fetus are possible if rubella virus is acquired by a pregnant woman: deafness, cataracts, heart defects, mental retardation, and liver and spleen damage (at least a 20% chance of damage to the fetus if a woman is infected early in pregnancy)

#### **SPREAD**

Spread by contact with an infected person, through coughing and sneezing. People can also get infected from touching infected secretions and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

#### **INCUBATION** (time from exposure to onset of symptoms)

14 to 23 days, usually 16 to 18 days

#### **CONTAGIOUS PERIOD**

From 7 days before until 7 days after rash onset. Maximal communicability occurs a few days before the rash appears to 7 days after rash onset.

#### **EXCLUSION**

Child care and School: Until 7 days after the rash appears.

Exclude unvaccinated children and staff until they are cleared by Contra Costa Public Health.

#### **DIAGNOSIS**

Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider. A test for the presence of rubella virus antibodies will be done.

#### **TREATMENT**

Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider. Treatment is supportive.

### PREVENTION/CONTROL

- **Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent rubella infection.** CDC recommendations for Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine can be found here: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/child-adolescent.html>
- Unvaccinated people who have been exposed to rubella should call their healthcare provider or local public health clinic as soon as possible to be vaccinated.
- Encourage parents/guardians to notify the child care provider or school when their child is vaccinated, so their records can be updated.
- Recommend staff stay home if they develop symptoms of rubella. Encourage parents/guardians keep their child home if they develop a rash, fever, and swollen glands behind the ears or neck.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues.
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily, and when soiled.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with secretions from the nose or mouth.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/> or <http://www.cdc.gov/rubella/>