



RUBELLA (GERMAN MEASLES)

Rubella is a childhood viral disease, which causes a rash, low-grade fever and swollen glands in the area behind the ears. Some children may have a very mild illness with no rash at all. However, if a pregnant woman without protection against rubella is exposed to the disease, there could be harmful effects to her baby. **Pregnant women should consult their physician at once if they have been exposed to rubella!**

Who gets this disease?

Some young adults remain susceptible to rubella due to high school graduation prior to the school rubella vaccination laws. Rubella is most often seen in unimmunized children and in this susceptible adolescent and young adult group.

How is it spread?

The virus is spread by large droplets spread through the air from sneezing or coughing, or by direct contact with infected nasal or saliva secretions.

What are the symptoms?

1. A two to three day rash that begins on the face and quickly spreads downward over the entire body.
2. A low-grade fever of 101-degrees Fahrenheit or less.
3. Swollen glands behind the ears. (NOTE: this may appear before the rash). Joint and body pain is most commonly experienced in adults.
4. Symptoms appear 12-23 days after exposure; usually 16-18.

Infected persons are contagious from one week **before** to 5-7 days after the appearance of the rash. A small percentage of properly immunized children may be infected with rubella due to occasional vaccine failure.

How can the spread of this disease be prevented?

The national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that children be immunized against rubella after 12-months of age. The two dose vaccine should be completed at 12-15 months of age and 4-6 years. This immunization is **required** for both childcare and school attendance. The vaccine is usually combined with measles and mumps vaccine.

Who should be excluded?

A child or staff member with rubella or suspect rubella should not return to daycare until seven days after the onset of the rash.

Reportable?

Yes. Rubella is reportable **immediately** by New Hampshire law to the Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496.