

# RUBELLA

## PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

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### **What is Rubella?**

*Rubella, also known as German Measles, is a contagious viral disease. Those most frequently affected by rubella are school-aged children and young adults. The peak incidence of infection is during late winter and early spring. Rubella infection during pregnancy can result in miscarriage, fetal death or birth defects.*

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### **How is it spread?**

The virus is spread by direct contact with droplets expelled into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can be transmitted to others 7 days before rash onset until 7 days after rash onset. The incubation period ranges from 14-23 days, usually 16-18 days.

### **How is it treated?**

There is no specific treatment for rubella. Adequate rest and fluid intake can be helpful. A non-aspirin product such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used to reduce fever and discomfort. Children or teenagers with a viral illness should not receive salicylates (such as aspirin) because of the risk of developing Reye syndrome.

### **How can we prevent Rubella?**

The best way to prevent rubella is to be vaccinated against it. The vaccine is given in combination with measles and mumps vaccine as MMR. Two doses are recommended. The first dose is given at 12-15 months of age; and the second dose at 4-6 years of age. Children and adults need to have two doses of MMR to be completely vaccinated. It is important that women of childbearing age know if they are protected against rubella.

### **SYMPTOMS OF RUBELLA**

- Low grade fever
- Fatigue
- Swelling of lymph glands (esp. those in back of neck)
- Rash starts on face, becomes generalized and lasts about 3 days
- Temporary joint pain and swelling often occurs in adults

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