

RUBELLA FACT SHEET

Parents are kindly requested to keep their children out of school for minimum of 7 days after the rash develops.

What is rubella?

Rubella, sometimes called “German measles,” is a disease caused by a virus. The infection is usually mild with fever and a rash. If a pregnant woman gets infected however, the virus can cause serious birth defects.

What are the symptoms of rubella?

In children, rubella usually causes the following symptoms that last 2 or 3 days:

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

Before the rash appears, older children and adults may also have:

- Swollen glands
- Cold-like symptoms
- Aching joints (especially in young women)

About half of the people who get rubella do not have symptoms.

Is it serious?

Rubella is usually mild in children. Complications are not common, but they occur more often in adults. In rare cases, rubella can cause serious problems, including brain infections and bleeding problems.

Rubella is most dangerous for a pregnant woman’s unborn baby. Infection during pregnancy can cause miscarriage, or birth defects like deafness, blindness, intellectual disability, and heart defects.

How does rubella spread?

Rubella spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

The disease is most contagious when the infected person has a rash and can spread up to seven days before the rash appears and also for up to six days after the appearance of the rash.

People without symptoms can still spread rubella.

Good hygiene including proper hand washing can help prevent the spread of the virus.

How is rubella treated?

There is no specific treatment for rubella. The condition is usually mild and improves without treatment within seven to ten days. As rubella is highly infectious, it is advised that you do not visit the doctor unless you are advised to do so. The self-care techniques listed below may help.

- Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be used to reduce a high temperature (fever) and treat any aches or pains.
- If your child's high temperature is causing them distress, you can also try to reduce it by keeping them cool. A cool (but not cold) compress, such as a damp flannel held to their forehead, can help.
- If your child has a high temperature, make sure they drink plenty of fluid because they may be at risk of dehydration. Keeping hydrated will also help reduce discomfort caused by coughing.
- Treat cold-like symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat or a cough with steam inhalation by putting child in sit in a hot, steamy bathroom Giving your child warm drinks, particularly ones containing lemon or honey, may also help to relax their airways, loosen mucus and soothe a cough.

If your symptoms don’t improve after ten days, or suddenly worsen, contact a doctor for advice.