



Rubella (German Measles)

What is rubella?

Rubella is an illness caused by a virus. With rubella, your child will have:

- A rash of widespread pink-red spots that starts on the face and moves rapidly downward, covering the body in 24 hours.
- Enlarged lymph nodes at the back of the neck.
- A mild fever.

The rash is not distinctive. Many other viral rashes look like it. It is difficult for health care providers to diagnosis rubella even after examining your child. This diagnosis usually can't be made unless there is an epidemic of it in your community.

What is the cause?

Rubella is caused by a virus. The symptoms usually appear 14 to 21 days after your child was exposed to the virus.

How long will it last?

The disease is mild. The rash will be gone and your child should be completely recovered in 3 or 4 days. Complications in general are very rare. However, pregnant women should avoid anyone who may have rubella. Complications to the unborn child of a pregnant woman with rubella are disastrous and include deafness, cataracts, heart defects, growth retardation, and encephalitis.

How can I take care of my child?

If your health care provider has determined that your child probably has rubella, the following may be helpful:

- **Treatment** No treatment is usually necessary. Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) for fever over 102°F (38.9°C), sore throat, or other pains.
- **Avoid pregnant women** If your child might have rubella, keep him away from any pregnant women. He is contagious for 5 days after the start of the rash.

- **Exposure of adult women to rubella** A non-pregnant woman exposed to rubella should avoid getting pregnant during the next 3 months. A pregnant woman exposed to rubella should see her obstetrician. If she has already received the rubella vaccine, she and her unborn child are probably protected. Even if she thinks she had German measles as a child and the recent exposure was minor or brief, she should have a blood test to determine her immunity against rubella.
- **Rubella vaccine** Get your children immunized against rubella at 12 to 15 months of age so you don't have to worry about pregnant women being exposed to rubella when a child gets a pink or red rash. It's safe to immunize a child who has a pregnant mother.

When should I call Idaho Falls Pediatrics?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- The rash becomes purple spots or dots.
- Your child starts acting very sick.

Call during office hours if:

- The rash becomes itchy.
- The fever lasts more than 3 days.
- You have other concerns or questions.

*NOTE: This information is provided as a public educational service. The information does not replace any of the instructions your physician gives you. If you have a medical emergency please call 911 or call the Hospital at (208) 529-6111. If you have questions about your child's care, please call Idaho Falls Pediatrics at (208) 522-4600.