



Rubella (German Measles)

Should there be a case of Rubella in your child's classroom, your child may be exposed. If your child received the Rubella vaccine (part of the MMR), the chance of him developing Rubella is extremely low. If your child has not been vaccinated, then it is quite possible that he might get Rubella.

What is Rubella?

Rubella is a mild viral illness that is not particularly serious for children. It causes a mild flu like illness with some swelling of the glands, particularly those at the back of the neck and a fine pinkish red rash. Adults can also develop painful joints (arthritis).

Why should I be concerned about Rubella?

If a pregnant woman develops Rubella in the early stages of pregnancy her unborn baby may also be infected and the consequences can be devastating. Rubella infection in the unborn can cause severe developmental delay, eye defects, hearing problems and a wide variety of congenital abnormalities.

Who gets Rubella?

Anyone who is not immune to it and who has contact with someone with Rubella can get Rubella. People who have either received Rubella vaccine (part of the MMR) or who have had Rubella should be immune. A simple blood test can tell whether or not you are immune to it. As many viral illnesses are similar to Rubella, and are often mistaken for it, you cannot consider yourself immune unless you have had the blood test or been vaccinated with the Rubella or MMR vaccine.

What should I do now?

If you and your child have received Rubella vaccine or you have been tested and know that you are immune, there is no need for concern. If your child has not received MMR vaccine, bring them to your GP for vaccination. The vaccine will not protect them if they have been exposed this time, but it will protect them from future exposures. If you are pregnant or likely to become pregnant, please contact your GP and find out whether or not you are immune to Rubella. If you are not immune (and are not pregnant) you should contact your GP and arrange to get the vaccine.

What should I do if I think my child has Rubella?

If your child develops a flu-like illness, with a fine red rash and swelling of the glands behind the ears, arrange for your doctor to see the child. He will be able to tell you if it looks like Rubella and will advise you what to do. If you suspect Rubella, do not bring your child into a crowded surgery waiting room, as this may only spread the infection further. There is no treatment for Rubella and symptoms resolve over a few days.

Can my child stay in school?

Children with Rubella must stay at home until at least 7 days after the appearance of the rash.

Your doctor and local health clinic will be able to answer any further questions that you might have about Rubella and the Rubella vaccine.