



Tarrant County Public Health

A healthier community through leadership in health strategy

The Facts About Rubella

What is Rubella?

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

What are the symptoms of Rubella?

Children with Rubella usually develop a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. It can be accompanied by a low fever (less than 101 degrees). These symptoms last two or three days. Older children and adults may also have swollen glands and symptoms like a cold before the rash appears. Aching joints occur in many cases, especially among young women. About half of the people who get Rubella do not have symptoms.

How is Rubella transmitted?

The disease is spread by contact with an infected person, through coughing and sneezing.

How can I be protected from Rubella?

The best way to protect against Rubella is by getting an MMR shot (Measles-Mumps-Rubella). Doctors recommend that all children get the MMR shot.

Are there complications from this disease?

Unborn children of non-immune mothers can die or suffer birth defects, including: deafness, cataracts, heart defects, mental retardation, liver damage and spleen damage (especially true if a woman is infected early in pregnancy).

Why should my child get the MMR shot?

The MMR shot protects your child from Rubella, a potentially serious disease (and also protects against Measles and Mumps). The shot prevents your child from spreading Rubella to a pregnant woman, whose unborn baby could develop serious birth defects or die from the disease. The shot also prevents your child from getting a rash and fever from the disease. An additional benefit from the shot is that it helps keep your child from missing school or childcare (and keeps you from missing work to care for your sick child).

As an adult do I need this vaccine?

Yes, you need an MMR shot if: you are a student beyond high school, work in a medical facility or healthcare occupation, travel internationally, are a passenger on a cruise ship, or are a woman of childbearing age. You do not need an MMR shot if: blood tests show that you are immune to Rubella, were born before 1957, have already received two MMR shots, or have been previously diagnosed with Rubella disease.

For more information, call 817-321-4700 or visit <http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

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