

Rubella Fact Sheet

Toledo-Lucas County Health Department | Emergency Preparedness



What is rubella?

Rubella is a contagious disease caused by a virus. It is also called “German measles”, but it is caused by a different virus than measles. Most people who get rubella usually have mild illness, with symptoms that can include a low-grade fever, sore throat, and a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. Rubella can cause a miscarriage or serious birth defects in a developing baby if a woman is infected while she is pregnant.

What are the signs and symptoms of rubella?

In children, rubella is usually mild, with a few noticeable symptoms. For children who do have symptoms, a red rash is typically the first sign. The rash generally first appears on the face and then spreads to the rest of the body, and lasts about three days. Other symptoms that may occur 1 to 5 days before the rash appears include:



- A low-grade fever
- Headache
- Mild pink eye (redness or swelling of the whites of the eye)
- General discomfort
- Swollen and enlarged lymph nodes
- Cough
- Runny nose

Most adults who get rubella usually have a mild illness, with low-grade fever, sore throat, and a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. Some adults may also have a headache, pink eye, and general discomfort before the rash appears. About 25 to 50% of people infected with rubella will not experience any symptoms.

How is rubella transmitted?

Rubella spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Also, if a woman is infected with rubella while she is pregnant, she can pass it to her developing baby and cause serious harm. A person with rubella may spread the disease to others up to one week before the rash appears, and remain contagious up to 7 days after. However, 25% to 50% of people infected with rubella do not develop a rash or have any symptoms.

People infected with rubella should tell friends, family and people they work with, especially pregnant women, if they have rubella. If your child has rubella, it's important to tell your child's school or daycare provider.



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What is the treatment for rubella?

There is no specific medicine to treat rubella or make the disease go away faster. In many cases, symptoms are mild. For others, mild symptoms can be managed with bed rest and medicines for fever.

Rubella can be prevented with rubella-containing vaccine, which is primarily administered as the combination measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. One dose of MMR vaccine is about 97% effective at preventing rubella if exposed to the virus.

For more information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
<https://www.cdc.gov/rubella/index.html>

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is committed to providing relevant and timely information during a public health emergency.

For the latest information, please visit:
www.lucascountyhealth.com



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