

Prevention and Control Measures Rubella

What is rubella?

- Rubella is a highly contagious viral disease characterized by slight fever, mild rash and swollen glands. Although most cases are mild, if rubella is contracted early in pregnancy, it can spread from the mother to her developing baby through the bloodstream and result in birth defects and/or fetal death. As a result of widespread immunization, rubella does not circulate in the United States but can be contracted through foreign travel.

How does Rubella spread?

- Rubella spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. People can get the disease in other countries and bring it home.
- A person with rubella may spread the disease to others up to 1 week before the rash appears; they can remain contagious up to 7 days after. However, 25% to 50% of people with rubella do not develop any symptoms but they can still spread it to others.
- If you are pregnant and infected with rubella, you can pass it to your developing baby which cause serious harm.

What are the symptoms?

- Rubella is usually mild, with few noticeable symptoms.
- Symptoms may include a rash, slight fever, joint aches, headache, discomfort, runny nose, sore throat and reddened eyes. The lymph nodes just behind the ears and at the back of the neck may swell, causing some soreness and/or pain.
- The rash, which may be itchy, first appears on the face and progresses from head to foot, lasting about three days.

Where can I find more information?

- Ask your doctor
- Call the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at 1-800-469-4599
- Go to cdc.gov and type Rubella in the SEARCH box.

Who is most likely to develop Rubella?

- Anyone who is not vaccinated against rubella is at risk of getting rubella.
- Rubella is very dangerous during pregnancy and for developing babies. If you are pregnant and infected with rubella, you can pass rubella to your developing baby. When a baby is born with rubella, this is called congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).
- Rubella can cause a miscarriage or serious birth defects in a developing baby. CRS can affect almost everything in the developing baby's body.



Alabama Department of Public Health

Immunization Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104

1-800-469-4599 <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/immunization/measles.html> 03/09/26

Is there a vaccine against Rubella?

- Rubella vaccine is given in combination measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine and is recommended for anyone born on or after January 1, 1957 who does not have laboratory evidence of rubella immunity. Birth before 1957 is not acceptable evidence of rubella immunity for women who could become pregnant; women of childbearing age should have their immunity checked and receive rubella vaccine if needed.
- Although only one dose of rubella-containing vaccine is required as acceptable evidence of immunity to rubella, children should receive two doses of MMR vaccine.
- Rubella vaccine is first given on or after a child's first birthday as MMR vaccine. Children usually receive the first dose between 12 and 15 months of age and the second dose prior to school entry at four to six years of age.

Prevention and Control Measures:

- Initiate control measures *within 3 days of initial case notification*
- Identify close contacts/ high risk
 - High risk contact definition (contacts at highest risk of severe disease or transmitting disease to others at high risk)
 - Infants <1 year of age
 - Pregnant women
 - Caregivers & household contact of infants (e.g., family members, friends, or babysitters who spend time caring for an infant)
 - All those attending or working in a childcare setting (i.e. same room)
 - Healthcare workers who care for infants < year of age or pregnant/postpartum women
 - Unimmunized/under immunized children
 - Contact tracing (7 days before and 7 days after rash onset)
- Conduct surveillance for secondary cases and contacts.
 - Make sure appropriate specimens are taken
 - If necessary, a letter may be sent out to notify close contacts
- Obtain immunization history of case/contacts
 - Recommend they contact their PCP
- Provide education that includes basic information about the disease
 - As needed, inform of communicability, incubation period, symptoms, transmission, complications, and isolation
 - Instruct cases and contacts on the necessary isolation or any other restrictions
 - Counsel contacts to watch for signs or symptoms of occurring within 23 days after exposure and to seek medical care promptly
 - Their PCP should be notified, and proper specimens taken



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