



Rubella

An illness requiring droplet precautions

This handout describes Rubella and its symptoms. It also explains how this disease can be spread and offers steps to prevent others from getting it.

To learn more about Rubella, visit these Web sites:

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/measles/rubella_index.htm

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/rubella/default.htm

What is Rubella?

Rubella (also called German measles, 3-day measles or Rubella virus infection) is a viral disease. It can be prevented with a vaccine.

You are not at risk if you have:

- Had blood tests showing that you are immune due to a history of clinical disease.
- Received 2 doses of the MMR (Mumps, Measles, Rubella) vaccine.

Rubella is a reportable disease. The health department is notified when a case is diagnosed to protect others who may have come in contact with you and are at risk of becoming ill.

The greatest danger from rubella is to unborn babies. If a woman gets rubella in the early months of her pregnancy, there is an 80% chance that her baby will be born with birth defects. Babies may be born deaf or blind. They may have damaged hearts or small brains. Many are mentally retarded. Miscarriages are also common among women who get rubella while they are pregnant.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of Rubella include a slight fever that lasts for about 24 hours, and a rash on the face and neck that lasts 2 or 3 days. The rash is pink or light red spots that may merge to form splotches.

Adults who get Rubella may get swollen glands in the back of the neck and pain, swelling, or stiffness in their joints.

How is it spread?

Rubella is spread when the infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, which can cause infected droplets to spray into the air. The infected mucus can land in other people's noses or throats when they breathe or put their fingers in their mouth or nose after touching an infected surface.

It takes about 3 to 12 days from the time of exposure to start showing signs of the disease. Rubella is most contagious while the rash is visible, but it can be spread from about a week before the rash starts until about a week after it goes away.

Questions?

Call 206-598-6122

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff is also available to help at any time.

Healthcare
Epidemiology and
Infection Control:
206-598-6122

Exposed or symptomatic persons should practice “respiratory hygiene” by wearing a mask, washing their hands often, and disposing of tissues in wastebaskets when coming into a health care facility. Free “Cover Your Cough Kits” are available at the Information Desk and at clinic intake areas.

How is it diagnosed?

Rubella is diagnosed by the symptoms, by the appearance of the rash, and by sending specimens to the laboratory for identification.

How are others protected at the medical center?

At University of Washington Medical Center, we place a “Droplet Precautions” sign near the doorway of your room to alert health care workers and your visitors to observe expanded precautions when caring for you to protect others who are at risk from acquiring the disease. Visitors, caregivers, and health care workers who have not had the disease or MMR (Mumps, Measles, Rubella) vaccine are advised not to enter the room.

What does it mean to be in droplet precautions?

Health care workers and caregivers wear masks, eye protection, gowns, and gloves when providing care.

Visitors should **not** enter the room if they have never had rubella, or are not sure if they have had the measles or the MMR vaccine. All visitors who enter the room should wear protective items – gowns, gloves, and masks.

Hand washing for 15 seconds, using alcohol hand gels, and environmental cleanliness are emphasized.

You will be asked to stay in your room unless you need to go to other departments in the hospital for treatment. If you leave your room, you will be asked to wash your hands and to wear a yellow gown, gloves, and a mask.

Please do not use the nutrition rooms while you are “in isolation.” When you want a snack or ice water ask a member of your health care team to bring it to you.

When can the precautions be stopped?

Droplet precautions for Rubella may be stopped 7 days after the rash appears.

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