

RUBELLA (GERMAN MEASLES)

****Reportable to local or state health department****

Rubella (German measles) is a mild illness that may be prevented through vaccination. If a pregnant woman develops rubella, the baby can become infected and develop serious problems known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS). If a pregnant woman is exposed to rubella, she should call her healthcare provider immediately; particularly if she does not know whether she is immune (has had rubella disease or vaccine in the past). See III-G for more information on rubella and pregnancy.

CAUSE

Rubella virus.

SYMPTOMS

Low-grade fever, swollen glands in the area behind the ears and in the neck, and rash. Rash usually appears first on the face and moves from head to foot. The rash usually lasts 3 days. Adults, especially women, may have sore or swollen joints. This joint pain usually lasts for less than one month. Up to half of all persons have no symptoms. Rarely, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) may occur.

SPREAD

When a person with rubella coughs or sneezes tiny droplets with rubella virus into the air and another person breathes them in. People can also get infected from touching these secretions and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

INCUBATION

It takes 14 to 21 days, usually 16 to 18 days, from the time a person is exposed until the symptoms begin.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

From 7 days before until 5 to 7 days after the rash begins.

DIAGNOSIS

A blood test for rubella should be done 3 to 5 days after the symptoms begin. Other laboratory specimens may be collected.

EXCLUSION

Childcare and School: Consult with Health District. May return on the 8th day after onset of rash. Exclude unvaccinated children and staff for at least 3 weeks after the onset of rash in the last person who developed rubella.

See: [NAC 441A.675](#)

TREATMENT

Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Nevada state law requires that all children 15 months of age or older, in childcare settings or schools be vaccinated against rubella or have a legal exemption. This vaccination is usually combined with measles and mumps (MMR) and given at 12-15 months of age. Two doses or a legal exemption are required for kindergarten and seventh grade enrollment.
- Unvaccinated people who have been exposed to rubella should call their healthcare provider or local public health clinic as soon as possible to be vaccinated. Encourage parents/guardians to notify the childcare provider or school when their child is vaccinated so their records can be updated.
- Recommend staff stay home if they develop symptoms of rubella. Encourage parents/guardians keep their child home if they develop a rash, fever, and swollen glands behind the ears or neck.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues.
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled. (See IV-4 through IV-6)
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with secretions from the nose or mouth. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

For more information, please contact your local health department.

[Southern Nevada Health District](#) (Clark County) 775-759-1300 (24 hours)

[Northern Nevada Public Health](#) (Washoe County) 775-328-2447 (24 hours)

[Carson City Health & Human Services](#) (Carson City, Douglas, Lyon Counties) 775-887-2190 (24 hours)

[Division of Public and Behavioral Health](#) (All other Counties) 775-400-0333 (24 hours)

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