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## Rubella (German Measles, 3-day Measles)

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**Description:** Rubella is a mild viral disease which is confirmed only by a laboratory test and by a link to a lab-confirmed case. Rubella usually causes mild illness in children. However, infants born to women who were infected with rubella during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy are at risk for severe birth defects. Rubella is very uncommon, with only one case per year in the state.

**Symptoms:** Symptoms include low-grade fever, headache, sore throat, cough and general body rash. The first sign of the childhood illness may be swollen glands, usually at the back of the skull and behind the ears, followed by a rash. The rash usually consists of pink, isolated spots which appear first on the face, then spread rapidly to the trunk, upper arms and upper legs. The rash fades rapidly and is usually gone within three days.

**How it is Spread:** It is spread through droplet contact (sneezing or coughing) from nose and/or throat secretions of infected person or from items contaminated with nasal discharges from an infected person.

**Incubation Period:** 12-23 days, usually 16-18 days.

**How Long Can a Person Pass the Infection to Others?** The infection can be spread to others up to seven days before and seven days after appearance of rash.

### **Responsibilities of Parents and Caregivers:**

- Notify the local health department. (See the ODH Communicable Disease Chart)

### **Control of Spread:**

- Rubella is a very serious disease in pregnant women. Any person with rubella must be excluded from attending or working in the child care setting for at least seven days after the onset of rash in accordance with rules of the local and state health departments. Contact parents of children not immunized.
- Treatment: None.

### **Comments:**

- Children should be immunized against rubella at age 12 months along with measles and mumps (M-M-R vaccine) and a second dose prior to school entry between 4-6 years of age. Both the vaccine and infection provide long-term immunity.
- Immunization after exposure will not necessarily prevent infection or illness resulting from that exposure. Pregnant women should not receive a rubella vaccine.