



SERVIZIO SANITARIO REGIONALE
EMILIA-ROMAGNA

For further information

If you wish to be vaccinated, contact your GP, community healthcare centre or your local health authority's public health and hygiene service (AUSL).

Call the toll-free service run by the
Regional Health Service

Numero Verde
800 033033

available from Monday to Friday, from 8.30 a.m.
to 5.30 p.m. and Saturday from 8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

or visit the Regional Health Service website

www.saluter.it



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RUBELLA

WHY RUN THE RISK?

Immunisation protects unborn children.

Free immunisation campaign for all
women of childbearing age to
prevent rubella (German Measles)
during pregnancy.



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EMILIA-ROMAGNA REGIONAL AUTHORITY PARTICIPATES IN THE IMMUNISATION CAMPAIGN ORGANISED BY THE EUROPEAN SECTION OF THE WHO, ADDRESSING ALL WOMEN OF CHILDBEARING AGE AND AIMED AT ELIMINATING CONGENITAL RUBELLA SYNDROME BY 2015.

Rubella and its symptoms

Rubella is an infectious disease caused by a virus. It usually presents with mild symptoms (slight temperature, swollen glands in the neck, appearance of pink spots on the skin), it has a benign course and does not have any consequences on health. However, if contracted during pregnancy, by women who have not been vaccinated or have not had the illness before, the virus can travel through the placenta barrier to infect the foetus and cause extremely serious damage: miscarriage, malformation of the heart, eyes and ears (congenital rubella syndrome).

The risk of the foetus being infected, and the possible consequences of the disease depend greatly on the time at which the mother contracts the disease. If contracted during the first 10 weeks of pregnancy, the likelihood of damage to the foetus can be as high as 85-90%; this risk drops to 30% if contracted between the 11th and 16th weeks of pregnancy and is almost nil after the 16th week.

If a pregnant woman has had rubella in the past or has been vaccinated, contact with the virus entails no risk to the foetus, except in extremely rare cases.

A blood test is needed to be sure that a person has had the illness before.

Possible damage to the foetus caused by rubella in early pregnancy:

- miscarriage
- eye and ear defects
- heart malformations
- brain damage
- liver and spleen damage
- bone alterations

Preventing rubella during pregnancy

Women of childbearing age need to be sure whether they have been vaccinated or have had the illness already and therefore whether they are immune to the rubella virus. If they are not, we recommend immunisation, the only means of prevention. All pregnant women are tested to check whether they are immune to rubella. If they are not, they are vaccinated immediately after giving birth, to protect any future children against rubella.

Pregnant women should not be vaccinated.

Women of childbearing age (between 15 and 44) must avoid becoming pregnant for one month after vaccination.

Immunisation

The vaccine is made up of live, attenuated virus that cannot cause rubella, but are able to stimulate the production of antibodies against infection.

Rubella vaccine is usually administered together with measles and parotitis (mumps) in a single injection (known as MMR).

One-off vaccine administration provides long-term cover against rubella in over 90% of vaccinated women.

People who have had one of the three illnesses before may be vaccinated without causing problems.

The vaccine is well tolerated and very rarely causes reactions. The possible mild side effects of vaccination are: high temperature, rash and swelling of the lymph nodes in the neck. Far rarer side effects include pain in the joints 1-3 weeks after vaccination. Even more rarely, vaccination may cause a drop in platelets (thrombocytopenia) for up to two months after immunisation.

All these potential side effects are temporary.

As for all vaccines, severe allergic reactions only occur in exceptional cases.

Preventing chicken pox

If contracted during pregnancy, chicken pox also presents a risk for the unborn child. Chicken pox immunisation is free for all women of childbearing age.

