



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

**NHS**

If you could get  
**pregnant,**

act now to protect against

**rubella**

**Catching rubella (also known as German Measles) during pregnancy can very seriously harm your unborn baby.**

Two doses of MMR vaccine can protect you against rubella for life. Make sure you are fully vaccinated before you get pregnant.

Speak to your GP practice to check that you are protected against rubella.



**i**mmunisation

The best way to protect the health of you and your baby

## What is rubella?

Rubella is an infectious disease caused by a virus. It is spread through air-borne droplets when infected people cough or sneeze. Whilst successful vaccination means that rubella is now very rare in the UK, it still occurs in other parts of the world.

To make sure that rubella stays very rare it is important that everyone is vaccinated.

Rubella is spread through air-borne droplets when infected people cough or sneeze.

It causes a high temperature and a red-pink rash. In most cases, it is a mild infection but if caught during pregnancy it can be harmful to your unborn child.

## What harm can rubella cause?

Rubella caught in early pregnancy can seriously harm your baby and cause:

- deafness
- eye problems, such as cataracts (cloudy patches on the lens of the eye),
- damage to the heart muscle, and
- brain damage (e.g. microcephaly)

It can also lead to the loss of your baby (miscarriage).

The risk of serious harm to the baby is highest if rubella is caught in the early weeks of pregnancy.

Rubella infection between 16 and 20 weeks of pregnancy may lead to deafness in the baby but is unlikely to cause other problems. Rubella after 20 weeks of pregnancy is not known to harm the baby.

## How do I know if I'm already protected against rubella?

You need 2 doses of a rubella-containing vaccine to make sure you are protected against rubella

This will usually be 2 doses of MMR vaccine. If you haven't had them it isn't too late to have them. You should encourage anyone who might have close contact with you or your partner during pregnancy to check that they are protected against rubella too.

### What should I do now?

If you are unsure which vaccines you have had, speak to your GP to check your immunisation history.

They will help you arrange to have your MMR vaccine if you have not already had 2 doses.

**For more information visit**  
**[www.nhs.uk/vaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations)**