

Rubella

Agent: Rubella virus

Mode of Transmission: Person-to-person transmission through contact with nose and throat secretions from infected people. The virus may also be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy, causing congenital rubella syndrome in the infant.

Signs/Symptoms: Fever and rash, with frequent occurrences of arthralgia, arthritis, and lymphadenopathy.

Prevention: Vaccination, preferably administered as MMR vaccine, should begin at 12 months of age.

Other Important Information: In 2004, rubella was declared to be no longer endemic in the United States.

Two cases of rubella were reported in Virginia during 2010. Prior to these cases, the last reported case occurred in 2001. The cases occurred in an unvaccinated adolescent with travel to an out-of-state U.S. tourist destination and in an unvaccinated, foreign-born adult with travel to a country where rubella is endemic.

Of the two cases reported in 2010, one occurred in a male from the 10-19 year age group, and the other in a female from the 50-59 year age group. The incidence rate (0.1 per 100,000) was the same for each of these age groups. Cases included one case from the white population and one case from the “other” race population and were reported from the northern and southwest regions. For both cases, onset was reported to have occurred in April.

These data illustrate that importations of rubella into the U.S. continue to occur, posing risks for rubella among unvaccinated persons. Of note, only five cases of rubella were reported in the United States in 2010. Although Virginia does not have a higher proportion of unvaccinated residents when compared to most other states, each year Virginia hosts large numbers of visiting travelers and welcomes thousands of residents returning from trips abroad. This underscores the importance of vaccination in travelers and non-travelers alike.