

Congenital Rubella Syndrome

Fact Sheet



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

What is Congenital rubella syndrome (CRS)?

CRS is an illness in babies who are born to mothers who are infected with rubella (german measles virus) during pregnancy.

What are the symptoms of CRS?

CRS can cause a range of symptoms depending on the stage of pregnancy when the mother is infected. If the mother is infected very early in the pregnancy (less than 12 weeks) the infant maybe not be carried to term, be stillborn, or have severe birth defects. The most common birth defects are: cataracts, heart defects, hearing loss, or learning delays.

How is CRS spread?

The syndrome is a result of a woman being infected with rubella while she is pregnant. The infant is able to spread the rubella virus for up to a year. The most common way it is spread is through nasal secretions.

How is CRS diagnosed?

CRS is diagnosed with laboratory tests after an infant who is suspected to have CRS is born.

How is CRS treated?

CRS cannot be cured. Some of the birth defects associated with CRS may be treated or their effects lessened.

How can you prevent CRS?

CRS can be prevented by making sure that women are immune to rubella before they become pregnant. The Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is very good at preventing rubella.

Women who are thinking about getting pregnant can be tested to see if they are

protected from rubella disease. If they are not protected, they can ask their doctor for the MMR vaccine.

All persons who work in health care or child care should be immune to rubella.

Pregnant women who are not immune to rubella should consult with their medical provider.

Where can I get more information?

For more information contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can also contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention by visiting the website <http://www.maine.gov/idepi> or by calling 1-800-821-5821. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website - <http://www.cdc.gov> - is another excellent source of health information.