

# If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, you need to know about vaccine-preventable diseases

You need to take care of yourself and get regular medical checkups – to protect both you and your baby.

Your health care provider will ask you questions and check you for conditions that can harm you and your baby. As part of your routine care, you should be tested for some vaccine-preventable diseases – like hepatitis B and rubella.



## What is hepatitis B?

- Hepatitis B is a virus that can be spread by contact with infected blood and other body fluids. The virus can be spread through sharing razors, nail clippers, nail files, and toothbrushes.
- The virus can also enter the blood through the sharing of needles or “works.”
- The virus can pass from one person’s infected blood to another through unclean piercings, tattoos, and acupuncture procedures.
- An infected person can pass the virus to another person through unprotected sex.
- If a pregnant woman is infected with hepatitis B, she can pass the infection on to her unborn child during her pregnancy or when her baby is born. It is estimated that over 1,200 hepatitis B- infected women give birth in Texas every year.

## What are the risks of hepatitis B infection?

Some people who are infected with the hepatitis B virus can get really sick, some develop liver disease or liver cancer, and some die from hepatitis B infection. Some people become chronic carriers, meaning they can pass the virus to others forever.

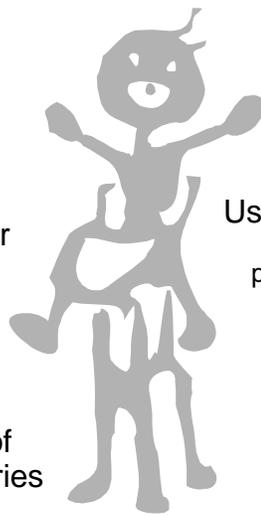
## Are you pregnant?

If you are, you should be tested for hepatitis B infection the first time you visit your health care provider and again when you go to the hospital to have your baby.

If you are infected with the hepatitis B virus, your baby will be given hepatitis B immune globulin and hepatitis B vaccine as soon as they are born to prevent him or her from becoming infected with hepatitis B.

Your baby will then need two additional doses of hepatitis B vaccine to complete the vaccine series (at 1 and 6 months of age). When your baby is one-year-old, the health care provider should test your baby’s blood to make sure that the vaccine worked.

If you are not infected with the hepatitis B virus, your baby will still need to be vaccinated against hepatitis B as part of their routine childhood immunizations.



## How can hepatitis B be prevented?

Abstain from sexual activity.

This will reduce your chances of becoming infected with the hepatitis B virus.

Use latex condoms every time you have sex. Condoms, when used correctly, may prevent pregnancy and diseases like hepatitis B, syphilis, and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Stay in a relationship with one person. Make sure you know that person is not infected with hepatitis B and does not inject drugs. A blood test is the only way to know for certain that a person is not infected with hepatitis B.

Do not use illegal drugs.

If you cannot stop using drugs, do not share needles or syringes with anyone.

Get vaccinated against hepatitis B.

If you are not already infected with the hepatitis B virus, 3 shots may prevent you from getting the virus from an infected person.

## What is rubella?

- Rubella is a virus that spreads from one infected person to another through respiratory secretions. This means that a person with rubella who coughs or sneezes can spread the disease to another person. Another name for rubella is German measles.
- Rubella is usually a mild disease. Persons infected with rubella may have a slight fever and a rash that starts on their neck, behind their ears, or on their faces. They may also have swollen glands and feel achy.
- About half the people who come down with rubella never get a rash.

## What are the risks of rubella infection?

A pregnant woman infected with rubella early in her pregnancy can pass the disease to her baby before birth; the baby's infection is called congenital rubella syndrome, or CRS.

CRS is very serious. Babies born with congenital rubella syndrome can be blind, deaf, mentally retarded, have heart defects, or die.

## Are you pregnant?

If you are, you should be tested for rubella the first time you visit your doctor. If this test shows that you are not immune to rubella, your doctor will tell you. If you are not immune to rubella, you should avoid contact with any person who has a rash and you should be vaccinated immediately **after** you have had your baby.

Because some people can be infected with rubella and not know it, you should also not travel into areas or countries where there are outbreaks of rubella.

## How can rubella be prevented?

Get vaccinated with rubella vaccine **before** you get pregnant. There is a very safe vaccine to protect against rubella. The rubella vaccine is almost always combined with measles vaccine and mumps vaccine and called MMR (the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine). This is the same vaccine that is given to babies at 1 year of age and to children at 4 years of age.

## Where can I get medical help?

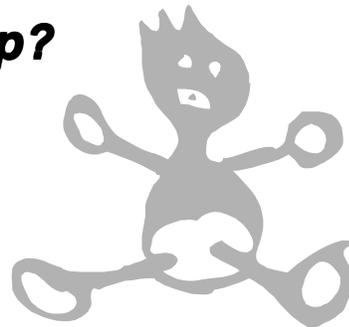
- Your doctor's office
- Local health departments
- Texas Department of Health regional clinics

Call the Immunization Division at **(800) 252-9152** to find out more about vaccine-preventable diseases.

Immunization Division staff can also provide you with information on perinatal hepatitis B prevention services in your area. These services include free hepatitis B tests and hepatitis B vaccine for household members and sexual contacts of pregnant women who are infected with the hepatitis B virus.



You **SHOULD NOT** be vaccinated against rubella while you are pregnant.



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