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Special Release

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RUBELLA INFECTION AND ITS PREVENTION

Members of the University community are hereby sensitized on infection with Rubella, its possible complications and recommendations for prevention to be shared with members of the University Community.

Introduction

Rubella is an acute, contagious viral infection that occurs most often in children and young adults. It is also known as German measles and is the **leading known vaccine-preventable cause of birth defects**. Rubella has a worldwide distribution and its control is said to be lagging behind those of other vaccine-preventable diseases. Rubella infection in pregnant women may cause fetal death or Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS). The highest risk of CRS is in countries where women of childbearing age do not have immunity to the disease. Humans are the only known host.

Clinical features of Rubella

When a woman is infected with the rubella virus early in pregnancy, she has a 90% chance of passing the virus on to her fetus. This can result in miscarriage, stillbirth or delivery of infants with congenital malformations. These defects may include congenital heart disease, cataract formation, deafness, mental retardation and other long life disabilities including autism, thyroid dysfunction etc.

Prevention of rubella infection is by immunization with MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) Vaccine which is administered according to the following regimen:

1st dose at 12 – 15 months of age

2nd dose at 4 – 6 years of age

The second dose can however be received earlier but must be at least 28 days after the first. Adults (especially, women of childbearing age) who have not been vaccinated before are also admonished to get vaccinated. Adults receive the same dose as children i.e. stat dose followed by a 2nd dose after a minimum of 28 days.

Remember that: **PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.**

Also, **THE BENEFITS OF VACCINATION FAR OUTWEIGH THE RISKS.**

NOTE: Vaccine is available at the Public Health Unit, UHS U.I.

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Thank you.

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