

# Specialists In Reproductive Medicine & Surgery, P.A.

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## **Rubella Vaccine Patient Information**

### **What is rubella?**

Rubella is also called German Measles. The disease itself is generally not severe but rubella exposure during the first trimester of pregnancy may lead to a severely affected (abnormal) infant.

### **What can happen if I am not immune to rubella?**

Depending upon the age of the gestation at the time of exposure, about one-half of the early pregnancies exposed to rubella will result in children with blindness, mental retardation, deafness or cardiac abnormalities.

### **What are the risks of getting the vaccine?**

Most patients who get the rubella vaccine will not have an adverse reaction. Occasionally, an individual may have a sore arm that lasts for two days. Swelling of the glands in the neck or a mild rash may occur rarely continuing for up to 1-2 weeks following the vaccine. There may be some mild muscle pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints starting 3 weeks after the vaccination with the symptoms generally lasting only a few weeks. There have been a few reported cases of the stiffness not completely resolving with the development of recurrent arthritic symptoms lasting months or years. Permanent damage to the joints is exceedingly rare. It should be clearly understood that the risk for arthritic problems is actually higher for the woman who is not vaccinated and gets infected with the natural virus. While still controversial, the arthritic risks seem to be less with vaccination than with a natural infection.

### **When should the vaccine not be given?**

If you are ill, have an allergy to eggs or neomycin, are immunocompromised or on prednisone, you should not receive the vaccine. Those women who are pregnant are also discouraged from getting the vaccine (see comments below).

### **How soon can I become pregnant after the vaccine?**

While there have not been any reported problems associated with rubella vaccination shortly before or after a woman gets pregnant, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and your physician here at SRMS advise that pregnancy be avoided for one month following the injection.

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