

## Cover Sheet

**DATE:** June 14, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Probable Rubella in Montana

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

***DISTRIBUTE*** to your local HAN contacts. This HAN is intended for general sharing of information. **Remove this cover sheet before redistributing and replace it with your own.**

**For LOCAL HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT reference only**

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact: Epidemiology at (406) 444-0273

**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:  
1-800-701-5769**

**DPHHS HAN Website:  
[www.han.mt.gov](http://www.han.mt.gov)**

**Remove this cover sheet before redistributing and replace it with your own.**

**Please ensure that DPHHS is included on your HAN distribution list.**

**Categories of Health Alert Messages:**

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919**

# Information Sheet

**Date:** June 14, 2011

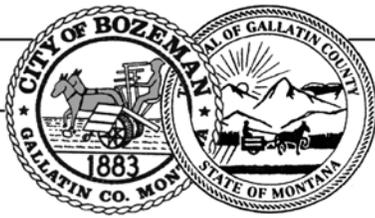
**Subject:** Probable Rubella in Montana

**Information:** Attached is a HAN message from Gallatin County regarding a probable Rubella Case. The case is under investigation and additional information will be available soon.

Testing recommendations for suspected cases of Rubella are detailed below. Please see the Gallatin HAN for additional recommendations.

Patients with suspected disease should be tested for Rubella by submitting a blood (serum) specimen to the Montana Public Health Laboratory (MTPHL) for Rubella IgG and IgM serology. Rubella virus infection is typically diagnosed by the identification of rubella virus-specific immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibodies in serum. Performing these two tests will help determine the status of the patient; results may indicate current or recent infection or past infection or immunity.

Specimens should be collected 2 days after onset of rash or later. Blood should be collected in a serum separator tube (gold or tiger top) and may be transported at ambient temperature. Date of onset needs to be included with submission, as this can affect the interpretation of the results. MTPHL provides courier service to most areas in the state for specimen transport. If you are unsure about courier service in your area or have any questions about collection and transport, please call Debbie Gibson at the DPHHS Laboratory at 406-444-5970.



[www.gallatin.mt.gov/health](http://www.gallatin.mt.gov/health)

## Gallatin City-County Health Department

**Human Services**  
215 W. Mendenhall, Rm 117  
Bozeman, MT 59715-3478  
(406) 582-3100 • Fax (406) 582-3112

**Environmental Health Services**  
215 W. Mendenhall, Rm 108  
Bozeman, MT 59715-3478  
406-582-3120 • Fax: 406-582-3128

### **\*\*Health Alert Network (HAN) Message\*\***

**Message Type:** GCCHD HAN Advisory  
**To:** Local HAN Contacts  
**Date:** June 13, 2011  
**Re:** Possible Rubella Case Identified in Gallatin County

A suspected case of rubella has been identified in a young child in Gallatin County. The child - who had not been immunized against measles, mumps or rubella - had been travelling extensively, but may have contracted the disease locally. To date, no additional cases of rubella have been identified and Gallatin City-County officials are working with the family to identify and advise close contacts.

**Background:** Rubella is an acute viral disease that causes fever and rash. Rubella poses a significant risk to cause birth defects, especially if contracted by a woman early in her pregnancy. Those birth defects include deafness, cataracts, heart defects, mental retardation, liver and spleen damage, and spontaneous abortion. Rubella is moderately contagious. The disease is most contagious when the rash first appears, but the virus may be shed approximately 7 days before rash onset up until 5 to 7 days or more after rash onset. The incubation period of rubella is 14 days, with a range of 12 to 23 days.

Symptoms are often mild, and up to 50% of infections may be subclinical or inapparent. In children, rash is usually the first manifestation and a prodrome is rare. In older children and adults, there is often a 1 to 5 day prodrome with low-grade fever, malaise, lymphadenopathy, and upper respiratory symptoms preceding the rash. The rash of rubella is maculopapular and occurs 14 to 17 days after exposure. The rash usually occurs initially on the face and then progresses from head to foot.

Complications of rubella are not common, but they generally occur more often in adults than in children. Arthralgia or arthritis may occur in up to 70% of adult women who contract rubella, but it is rare in children and adult males. Fingers, wrists, and knees are often affected. Joint symptoms tend to occur about the same time or shortly after appearance of the rash and may last for up to 1 month; chronic arthritis is rare.

#### **Actions recommended:**

- Health care providers are reminded to report any suspected cases of rubella to Gallatin City-County Health Department.
- Obtain serum specimens to make or rule out the diagnosis. The Montana Public Health Laboratory will perform the serology tests at state expense.
- Urge parents to have their children vaccinated to protect against rubella and other vaccine preventable diseases. This case presents an opportunity to illustrate to parents the importance of immunizing children according to ACIP guidelines.