

The Centre for Reproductive Medicine

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RUBELLA REINFECTION

- Rubella embryopathy arising from maternal reinfection can occur even though the woman has been shown to be previously immune. All pregnant women, regardless of immune status, should therefore be advised to avoid contact with known or suspected Rubella affected individuals.
- Rubella embryopathy when a mother has been shown to have been previously immune is very rare and reassurance is appropriate if an immune and pregnant woman is exposed to the virus.
- *Notwithstanding such reassurance rubella reinfection is most commonly asymptomatic and the best method of detection is by measurement of Rubella specific IgM antibodies.* Advice concerning the timing of such tests can be sought from a pathologist. Test and retest of Rubella IgG can be facilitated if all women are tested for these at the beginning of each pregnancy and the serum stored by the pathologist.
- It is generally agreed that the risk of rubella embryopathy arising from rubella reinfection is small (Morgan-Capner et al, Lancet i:244, 1985) and the counselling of such patients is probably best undertaken in consultation with a paediatrician and/or a physician with special expertise in infectious diseases.
- Prenatal diagnosis may be required but may be difficult. Referral to a specialist centre is recommended.

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