Viral Exanthems, Adult

Many viral infections of the skin are called viral exanthems. Exanthem is another name for a rash or skin eruption. The most common viral exanthem include the following:

- German measles or rubella.
- Measles or rubeola.
- Roseola.
- Fifth disease.
- Chickenpox or varicella.

DIAGNOSIS

There are a number of other problems causing a rash that may appear as one of the viral exanthems. Most often your caregiver can determine this by looking at the rash. They have distinct patterns and looks. Lab work may or may not be done if the diagnosis is uncertain.

TREATMENT

Immunizations have lead to a decrease in the number of cases of measles, mumps, and rubella. Viral exanthems may require clinical care by a physician or other caregiver if other problems or a germ *(bacterial*) infection follow. The rash may be associated with:

- Minor sore throats.
- Aches and pains.
- Runny noses.
- Watery eyes.
- Tiredness.
- Some coughs.
- Gastrointestinal infections causing stomach sickness *(nausea*), vomiting and diarrhea.

These rashes **DO NOT** respond to medications that kill germs (*antibiotics*).

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, diarrhea or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Drink a lot of clear fluids.

GET HELP IF:

- You develop swollen neck glands.
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- You develop tenderness over your sinuses.
- You are not feeling partly better after 3 days.
- You develop muscle aches.
- You are feeling more tired than you would expect.
- You get a persistent cough with mucus.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- You develop a sore throat with pus and difficulty swallowing.
- You develop neck pain.
- You develop a severe headache.
- You develop vomiting that will not stop.

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