

## Incidence of congenital rubella syndrome

Before vaccination was introduced in the early 1970s it is estimated that 200 - 300 infants were born with Congenital Rubella Syndrome in each non-epidemic year in the UK; many more were born in epidemic years. Rubella in pregnancy was responsible for 15 - 20% of significant congenital hearing loss and 2% of congenital heart disease.

Rubella immunisation was introduced in the UK in 1970 for women of child bearing age and school girls. Since then there have still been just over 800 babies born damaged as a result of their mothers catching rubella in the early stages of pregnancy. In the same period there have been over 6,500 rubella related terminations.

Since the triple MMR vaccine was introduced in 1988 in the UK there have been just 68 rubella births and only 10 this century<sup>1</sup>; both the US and Finland have announced the elimination of rubella and rubella births because of comprehensive MMR immunisation over a long period.

The World Health Organisation, in 2000, estimated that there were at least 100,000 cases of CRS every year in the developing world.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures from the National Congenital Rubella Surveillance programme