

Rubella By WILLIAM DEIZ

Vaccine will prevent tragedy

She was only about six when I saw her, but I won't forget her. Her name (not real name) was Toni. She was a pretty girl then, I imagine she still is. But she had problems. One of them was that she had to wear glasses that were particularly thick - I found out later that even those glasses didn't really help her blindness. And she wore a hearing aid, with which I was told, she could barely make out the sound of a beating drum. Yet here she was in a school in Vancouver, Wash., trying with others like her, to learn the rudiments that some day might enable her to read and to write.

There was one other thing about her too—besides an obvious determination not to be held back—her condition was caused, doctors say, by the fact that her mother, when she was pregnant with her, was exposed too, and caught, Rubella.

Rubella - or "German Measles" as it is more "popularly" known causes a very mild reaction in adults. Usually they get a temperature, break out into a rash, are told to take it easy for awhile, and pretty soon it's all over. That's probably why Toni's mother didn't think too much about it at the time.

But to the unborn child Rubella can be dangerous and deadly. Multnomah County Health Officer Dr. John Donnelly says the Rubella virus attacks the unborn fetus itself. Unless the baby is extremely fortunate, he or she is then born with some kind of deformity.

1965 was the last time the Portland area has had a major outbreak of Rubella. Health officials tell us the disease is cyclical. They also say that we are probably in store for another major outbreak this winter.

What, then, can we do about it?

For one thing the Portland public school system is waging a major campaign right this

minute to inoculate the system's school children—that's right the children—against Rubella. You see pregnant women are most often exposed to Rubella by their own school-aged children. Dr. Donnelly says the theory behind the vaccination campaign is to "build a wall or protection around the mother." The fewer the number of children who come down with the disease, he reasons, the fewer the number of mothers who will be exposed.

The vaccine itself is safe for children and adults alike. However it poses problems for the pregnant woman. Health officials are wary about giving the vaccine to a pregnant woman because, like most vaccines, Rubella vaccine contains a little bit of the disease it is protecting against. And health officials fear this "little bit" might be enough to cause problems with the unborn fetus.

They are even hesitant to give the vaccine to women who MIGHT become pregnant within three months of their shot.

So the campaign's primary thrust is toward children, and toward those who won't be having children for awhile.

Now the problem with children is that they cannot decide to have the shots for themselves...in fact in most cases, given the chance to avoid a shot, most kids heartily endorse the opportunity. Actually the shots themselves don't hurt in this current campaign, because an electronic "gun" is used that forces the vaccine under the skin by air pressure...no worrisome needles to bother the kids.

But to get the shots kids have to have written permission from their parents. And it is in this area that problems are rising, according to health officials.

They say many parents think the regular measles vaccine given children when they are young is good enough to protect them against Rubella. THIS IS

NOT TRUE. Rubella is a different disease, and in fact has no relation to common "measles."

Officials say it has been misnamed "German Measles." The only proper name for it is Rubella.

So as parents of school age children you can do a lot. It will cost you no money. All you have to do is sign the slip of paper which asks permission for your child to receive Rubella vaccine. Your child may have lost the slip. In that case you

should insist that he or she bring you another one from school.

For most people, Rubella itself is little more than an inconvenience. For kids like Toni, however, it is a tragedy.

The Portland Traffic Safety Commission reminds drivers that carbon monoxide is an odorless, silent killer. Make sure your exhaust system is in good shape as winter driving begins. Always open your car window a crack when you're driving.

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Tid Bits for Living

By REV. T.L. STRAYHAND

During a Harvest Festival (or Thanksgiving) in India, an old widow arrived at her church with an extraordinarily large offering of rice—far more than the poor woman could be expected to afford. The itinerant pastor of the church did not know the widow well, but he did know that she was very poor and so he asked her if she were making the offering in gratitude for some unusual blessing.

"Yes," replied the woman, "My son was sick and I promised a large gift to God if he got well."

"And your son has recovered?" asked the pastor.

The widow paused, "No," she said, "He died last week, but I know now that he is well and in God's care, for that I am thankful."

Did you pause to give thanks this Thanksgiving Day? Look at your life in reality and you will find that whatever your present state there are others who do not have it so good. However you fare there are some who fare worse. Whatever you do not have there are some who have less. Whatever you consider a blessing you have not received, you have received many you did not expect.

Matthew Henry, the famous Bible scholar expressed his thanks this way when he was robbed of his purse:

"Let me be thankful first because I was never robbed before, second, although they took my purse, they did not take my life, third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed." Are you thankful for the type of person you are?

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