



Fifth Disease (Parvovirus B19)

What is it?

- Fifth disease is sometimes called “slapped cheek” syndrome because of the red rash it causes. It is a common infection of the airway and lungs.
- It's most common in late winter to early spring.

Signs and symptoms?

- There may be no symptoms or mild symptoms that may include: Low-grade fever, headache, mild cold-like symptoms, upset stomach, sometimes joint pain or swelling.
- It starts as a very red rash on the cheeks that looks like the face has been slapped.
- After 1 to 4 days, a red, lace-like rash appears, first on the torso and arms, and then spreads to the rest of the body.
- The rash may last from 1 to 3 weeks, rash may come and go. It can be worse with changes in temperature, exposure to sun, and exercise.

How does it spread?

- This virus spreads:
 - By touching the hands of someone who has the infection and then putting your hands in your mouth.
 - By touching an object (such as a toy) that has been touched by someone who has the infection and then putting your hands in your mouth.
 - By coming in contact with the virus in the air, after an infected person has coughed or sneezed.
- The virus is most contagious a few days before the rash starts. Once the rash appears, your child can no longer pass it to anyone else.
- This virus can spread from a pregnant woman to her unborn child.

How to decrease the spread?

- Handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of infection.
- Careful disposal of used facial tissue.
- Not sharing drinking cups or eating utensils.
- Covering nose and mouth while coughing and sneezing.

Pregnant Women

- If you're pregnant and develop a rash or have sore joints and have been exposed to someone with fifth disease (or to anyone with an unusual rash), call your health care professional.

Recommended Absence:

Only when the child is not well enough to participate or according to your policy. Your child can attend school while they have the rash.

Fifth disease is **not** reportable to Medical Officer of Health.

Resources:

www.aboutkidshealth.ca

www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Updated January 2019