

Fifth Disease (Human Parvovirus B19)

Dear Parents:

There has been a case of FIFTH DISEASE (ERYTHEMA INFECTIOSUM) diagnosed in your child's classroom. Fifth Disease is a mild skin disorder caused by a parvovirus. It is called Fifth Disease because it was named after four other childhood rashes were named. It is most commonly seen in late winter and early spring

What are the signs or symptoms?

- Fever
- Headache
- Tired, muscle aches
- Uncommon symptoms are itchiness, cough, diarrhea or vomiting, runny nose and joint aches
- Red "slapped-cheek" rash appears 4 to 14 days (up to 21 days) after these signs or symptoms. This characteristic rash is followed shortly by a lacelike-appearing rash proceeding from trunk to arms, buttocks and thighs
- Rash may disappear and then reappear after exposure to heat for weeks: once rash appears, the child is no longer contagious and usually does not feel ill
- Individuals can be infected and infectious without ever having signs or symptoms
- Disease can be severe in people with sickle cell disease or certain blood disorders, as well as those with compromised immune systems

What are the incubation and contagious periods?

- Incubation Period: 4 – 14 days but can be as long as 21 days.
- Contagious Period: until the rash appears

How is it spread?

- Respiratory (droplet) route: Contact with large droplets that form when a child talks, coughs or sneezes.

What is the treatment?

- Your physician will advise you about managing uncomfortable symptoms.
- As with other viral infections, **DO NOT GIVE CHILDREN ASPIRIN PRODUCTS**

When can my child return to school?

- Your child may return to school when his/her symptoms have gone away, and your child is able to partake in the activities of the school day. **YOUR CHILD MAY NOT RETURN UNTIL HE/SHE IS FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT TAKING TYLENOL OR MOTRIN. We reserve the right to send a student home who displays signs of ill health that may jeopardize the general welfare of the class.**

Additional Information:

- There is no vaccine for Fifth Disease. An infection with this virus usually gives future immunity to further episodes of Fifth Disease.
- Please report episodes of confirmed Fifth Disease to the nurse's office as soon as possible. Please contact us even if your child was diagnosed on a non-school day (weekend, holiday, vacation).