

## Fifth Disease

### Definition:

A viral infection, also called erythema infectiosum, with Parvovirus B19, which causes:

- Mild nonspecific illness
  - Fever in 10-30% of cases
  - Aches or malaise
  - Headache
  - Often occurs before the rash appears
- Distinctive rash
  - Intensely red "slapped cheek" appearance to face for 1-3 days
  - Area around mouth may look pale
  - Symmetric flat "lacy" rash on arms and legs, spreading toward trunk
  - Rash can remain and fluctuate in intensity for weeks to months, especially with sun exposure or heat
  - Arthralgia (joint aches) and, infrequently, arthritis (joint swelling - this is seen more in adults)

### Spread By:

- Respiratory secretions
- Blood
- Can not infect pets

### Incubation:

- 4-21 days
- Contagious period is before rash appears when symptoms are nonspecific. Once rash appears, patient is no longer contagious.

### Home Care:

- Itch control
  - Benadryl
  - Avoid direct sun and overheating

### Special Circumstances:

- Parvovirus B19 can cause brief suppression of red blood cell production in the bone marrow. This is not a problem for children without blood disorders but can cause trouble with sickle cell anemia or other blood diseases. A physician should always evaluate these patients.
- Parvovirus B19 can cause fetal infection in pregnant women who never had fifth disease and are not immune. Pregnant females exposed to a patient with fifth disease should contact their obstetricians for advice. They may require a blood test to tell if they are immune to the virus, and their pregnancy may require more careful monitoring.

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