

# Fifth Disease

## Definition

- Fifth disease is a viral rash that starts with red cheeks
- Then it spreads to the shoulders and upper thighs
- Average age: 4 to 12 years

## Health Information

### Symptoms

- Bright red cheeks on both sides for 1 to 3 days. Looks like "slapped cheeks".
- Followed by pink "lace-like" (net-like) rash of arms and legs.
- "Lacy" rash mainly occurs on thighs and upper arms/shoulders.
- Rash also occurs on chest and stomach in 50% of children.
- The rash isn't itchy or painful.
- No fever or low-grade one less than 102° F (39° C).

### Cause

- Fifth disease is caused by the human parvovirus B19.
- Not related to dog parvovirus.

### Prevention of Spread to Others

- Good hand washing can prevent spread of infection.
- Once the rash occurs, the child can no longer spread the virus.

## Care Advice

### 1. Overview:

- Fifth disease is a unique viral rash that is harmless.
- It does not cause itching or pain.
- It can be treated at home.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

### 2. Fever:

- For fevers above 102° F (39° C), give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Note: Lower fevers are important for fighting infections.
- For ALL fevers: Keep your child well hydrated. Give lots of cold fluids.

### 3. Pregnant Women:

- The risk of Fifth disease is to the unborn babies of pregnant women. It is not harmful to the woman herself.
- A pregnant woman should see her OB doctor if she is exposed to Fifth disease.
- He will do a test to see if the mother already had the disease. If she has, she is protected.
- If not, the pregnancy will need to be watched closely. Some fetuses infected with Fifth disease before birth develop complications. Ten percent develop severe anemia and 2 % may die.
- Birth defects, however, are never a result of this virus.

4. **What to Expect:**

- The lace-like rash can come and go for 1 to 3 weeks.

5. **Return to School:**

- Once your child has the "slapped cheeks", they can no longer spread the illness. Likewise, the lacy rash cannot be spread to others either.
- Your child does not need to stay home from child care or school.
- The disease can be spread during the week BEFORE the rash begins.
- Therefore, exposed children should try to avoid contact with pregnant women. This may be hard to know in advance.

## Call Your Doctor If

- Fever above 102° F (39° C) occurs
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

### Pediatric Care Advice

**Author:** Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

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