

## **Fifth Disease (“Slap Cheek”)**

**What is fifth disease?** It is typically a mild illness that is caused by a virus called parvovirus. It can last from one to three weeks with:

- Runny nose or mild fever
- Blotchy red rash, which:

-Starts on the cheeks (like "slapped cheeks") and can be all over body

-May be itchy

-May come and go, especially after exercise or sun exposure

Although fifth disease is usually mild, it can be dangerous for:

- *Pregnant women because it can cause miscarriage or stillbirth.*
- *People with sickle cell anemia and immune problems (e.g., HIV/AIDS, cancer chemotherapy, organ transplant, taking steroid medication).*

**How does fifth disease spread?** It spreads by:

- Being in a room together, coughing, and sneezing
- Touching mucus from the nose or saliva
- Kissing on the lips
- Sharing food, eating utensils, and mouthed toys

**When is fifth disease contagious?**

- One to two weeks *before* the rash appears. After the rash, it is usually not contagious.
- After exposure, it typically takes two to three weeks to get sick.

**How do I know if my child has fifth disease?** A doctor can tell by the signs and symptoms.

**What should I do if my child has fifth disease?**

**Treatment:** Follow your doctor's recommendations:

- Help your child recover by encouraging rest, food, and plenty of liquids to drink.

*If your child or anyone at home has a blood disorder, immune problems, or is pregnant, contact your doctor immediately.*

**Should my child stay home?** Children with fifth disease do not need to stay home as long as they feel well enough to participate. Notify your program.

**To limit the spread:**

- Wipe noses with clean tissues, throw them away, and wash your hands.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow and away from people.
- Don't share food, pacifiers, bottles, or toothbrushes. Wash eating utensils, drinking cups, and mouthed toys well between uses.
- Don't kiss children on the mouth.
- Open windows indoors and maximize outdoor play.