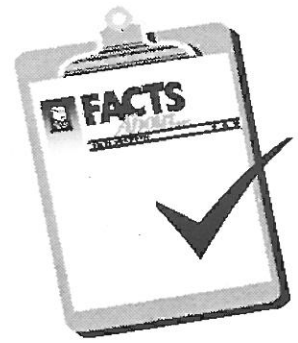




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FIFTH DISEASE (ERYTHEMA INFECTIONOSUM)

What is it?

Erythema infectiosum, slapped cheek, human parvovirus, and fifth disease all refer to the same mild illness. It is caused by a virus, the human parvovirus B19.

How is it spread?

Fifth Disease is spread from person to person through saliva, sneezing/coughing and rarely blood. The disease is usually spread before onset of the rash.

Fifth Disease occurs most often during winter and spring. Outbreaks (common occurrences) frequently occur in children in elementary school.

What do I look for?

Fifth Disease often begins with mild respiratory symptoms and may include fever. Frequently, a rash on the face appears which is intensely red with a "slapped cheek" appearance. A lace-like rash on the trunk, arms and legs may also be seen. The rash fades, but may recur for weeks on exposure to sunlight or heat.

How is it treated?

Fifth Disease is caused by a virus. There is no treatment.

How can I protect myself?

- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and encourage others to do the same
- Wash your hands after handling nose and throat discharges (i.e., after disposal of facial tissues containing nose discharges)
- Avoid sharing eating utensils
- Reduce person-to-person contact with those who have symptoms
- Persons with chronic haemolytic anemias, persons with immunodeficiencies and pregnant women who have continued exposure should see a doctor

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For more information
DURHAM REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT
905-668-7711 1-800-841-2729 or www.durham.ca