



## **FIFTH DISEASE**

### **What is it?**

Fifth disease is a viral rash infection that commonly affects children. It is caused by a Human parvovirus B19.

### **How is it spread?**

The virus is spread by exposure to respiratory droplets from the nose and throat of infected people. Anyone can be infected, but the disease seems to occur more often in elementary school-age children.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Initial symptoms include fever, runny nose, and a headache. A few days later, a red rash generally appears on the cheeks giving a slapped face appearance. The rash may then extend to the rest of the body and can fade and reappear for 1-3 weeks or longer. Sometimes, the rash is lacy in appearance and may be itchy. Some children may have vague signs of illness or no symptoms at all. Adults are usually immune but may experience the same symptoms as children and also suffer joint discomfort. People with fifth disease appear to be most contagious during the week prior to the appearance of the rash. By the time the rash appears, a person is usually no longer contagious.

### **What is the treatment?**

At this time, there is not a specific treatment or vaccine for Fifth disease.

### **How can I guard against the spread of this disease?**

Transmission of Fifth's Disease may be reduced by the following measures:

- Handwashing
- Practicing good cough etiquette (i.e. "cough in your sleeve," throwing your used tissues away)
- Staying home when you are sick