

Fifth Disease

(erythema infectiosum, parvovirus B19 infections)

What is Fifth Disease?

- Fifth disease is a mild rash illness caused by parvovirus B19.
- Fifth disease got its name because it was fifth in a list of historical classifications of common skin rash illnesses in children.
- Fifth disease is more common in children than adults.

How Does Fifth Disease Spread?

- Parvovirus B19—which causes fifth disease—spreads through respiratory secretions (such as saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus) when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- You are most contagious when it seems like you have "just a cold" and before you get the rash or joint pain and swelling.
- After you get the rash you are not likely to be contagious, so then it is usually safe for you or your child to go back to work or school.
- Once you recover from fifth disease, you develop immunity that generally protects you from parvovirus B19 infection in the future.

What are the Symptoms?

- The first symptoms of Fifth disease are usually mild and may include
 - Fever
 - Runny nose, and
 - Headache
- Then you can get a rash on your face and body
 - After several days, you may get a red rash on your face called "[slapped cheek](http://www.cdc.gov/parvovirusb19/photos.html)" [rash](http://www.cdc.gov/parvovirusb19/photos.html)(<http://www.cdc.gov/parvovirusb19/photos.html>). This rash is the most recognized feature of fifth disease. It is more common in children than adults.
 - You may also have painful or swollen joints. This is more common in adults, especially women. Some adults with fifth disease may only have painful joints, usually in the hands, feet, or knees, and no other symptoms.

How do I Stop the Spread?

- There is no vaccine or medicine that can prevent parvovirus B19 infection. You can reduce your chance of being infected or infecting others by
 - washing your hands often with soap and water
 - covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
 - not touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
 - avoiding close contact with people who are sick
 - staying home when you are sick

Where Can I Find More Information?

- Go to cdc.gov and type Fifth Disease in SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health

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800-338-8374 www.adph.org/epi