

# **The Facts about Fifth Disease (Parvovirus B19)**

It has come to my attention that one student in the first grade and one student in the second grade have been diagnosed with Fifth Disease.

Fifth Disease is a common viral childhood illness that may cause a rash and mild fever.

## **What are the symptoms?**

About one week after exposure, the child may develop a low-grade fever that lasts five to seven days. The child may look like their cheeks were slapped and have a characteristic lacy-appearing rash that may appear on the arms, trunk, and legs. Occasionally, the rash may come and go for days or weeks. Otherwise, the child is usually without symptoms.

## **How long after contact can illness develop?**

The illness can develop from 4 to 21 days after contact.

## **How is it spread?**

It is spread through contact with droplets from nose, mouth or eyes.

## **When is the child most contagious?**

The child is only contagious during the week before the rash develops. Children are usually without symptoms. Pregnant women should consult with their obstetricians for further information about exposure.

## **When can the child return to school?**

There is no need to restrict attendance once the rash has appeared. The only reason to exclude a child from school is if she/he feels too ill to attend.

## **How can we prevent the spread of infection?**

You can prevent the spread of infection through good *hand washing* and *hygiene* and proper *disposal of soiled tissues*.

For further information please consult your pediatrician or obstetrician.

HIES School Nurse  
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