

FIFTH DISEASE FACT SHEET

What is fifth disease?

Fifth disease is a common childhood illness caused by a virus called human parvovirus. The disease usually is mild.

What are the symptoms of fifth disease?

- Low-grade fever, runny nose, headache (at the beginning)
- Red rash on the face that looks like slapped cheeks
- Lace-like rash on the trunk, arms, legs, and/or buttocks that fades and may reappear depending on the temperature or exposure to sunlight

Symptoms usually appear four to 14 days after exposure.

Who can get fifth disease?

Fifth disease is a common childhood illness. Adults who have not had fifth disease when they were young can get infected but may not have symptoms; if they have the rash symptoms, they may also have joint pain or swelling.

What is the treatment for fifth disease?

Consult your health care provider about remedies for symptoms. Keep your child home from school; keep your child comfortable and watch for signs of more serious illness. A pregnant woman exposed to a person with fifth disease should inform her health care provider about the exposure.

How does fifth disease spread?

Fifth disease is spread by contact with secretions from the nose and throat of an infected person, such as by sharing drinking cups or utensils. An infected person is contagious before the rash appears. Once the rash appears, the person is no longer contagious.

How can fifth disease be prevented?

- Wash hands thoroughly and frequently.
- Cover nose/mouth while coughing/sneezing with tissue; or cough/sneeze into the inside of the elbow.
- Do not share personal items, such as drinking cups or utensils, with other people.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/fifth-disease/>