

FIFTH DISEASE



WHAT IS FIFTH DISEASE?

- A mild infection caused by a virus that is common in school-age children.
- Begins with a “slapped cheek” appearance, followed by 1-4 days of a red lace-like rash first on arms, trunk, upper legs and hands.
- Rash may worsen when exposed to sunlight or heat.
- No vaccine is available, and no treatment for it.
- Many infected children do not become ill.
- Illness may be more severe in adults.
- Can be serious for unborn babies if the mother is infected.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

- Coughing, sneezing, sharing glasses or cutlery, and kissing
- Exposure to blood or blood products
- A mother may pass it to her newborn
- The virus usually spreads before the rash appears. By the time the rash appears, the person usually is no longer contagious.

HOW CAN I PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FIFTH DISEASE?

- **Wash your hands!**
- Do not share cutlery or glasses.
- Immediately dispose of tissues containing nose and mouth secretions.

GOING TO DAY CARE OR SCHOOL?

Children with fifth disease can continue to go to day care or school if they are well enough to take part in regular activities.

Contact your health care provider if you are exposed to fifth disease and are pregnant, have a chronic red blood cell disorder, or have a problem with your immune system.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org

Source: Canadian Paediatric Society, KFL&A Public Health