

FIFTH DISEASE

Also known as: erythema infectiosum, parvovirus infection

SYMPTOMS

It may remain asymptomatic. The symptoms vary depending on the age:

Children show distinctive facial rash on both the cheeks which can extend to arms, thighs and buttocks. The initial symptoms include:

- Fever
- Stomach upset
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Sore throat

In adults, parvovirus causes

- Joint soreness
- Joint aches usually in hands, wrists, knees and ankles

CAUSES

Caused by the human parvovirus B19. Infection is more common during outbreaks of winter and spring in the elementary schools.

- The infection spreads through body fluids like saliva, mucus, sputum and blood
- Highly contagious in the week before the rash appears
- Pregnant woman can pass on the infection to baby

PREVENTION

- Wash hands frequently
- Don't share food and drinks with affected people
- Take plenty of water
- Isolation from the infected person till he/she develops rashes

COMPLICATIONS

If untreated, complications may include:

- Parvovirus infection in anemic patients, ceases the production of red blood cells and can lead to anemia crisis.
- **If the infection occurs during pregnancy, it affects the RBC count in the fetus.**
- In rare cases, severe anemia leads to miscarriage or stillbirth.
- Triggers anemia in people with a weakened immune system due to HIV or cancer treatment.

DIAGNOSIS

Common tests & procedures

- Physical examination: Diagnosis is made by simply observing the skin rash.
- Blood test: Specific antibody tests are done in case of pregnant women and patients who have weakened immune system.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider.

The infection is self-limiting and most cases do not require treatment. Medication may be given to relieve symptoms.

MEDICATION

- Antipyretics: To relieve the symptoms of fever and headache.
- Acetaminophen
- Self-care
 - Good enough rest
 - Drink plenty of water
 - Fever should be taken care
 - Isolation till the rashes are developed