

Advice to other groups

The infection may be more serious for people who have diseases which impair their immune system and for people who have certain serious blood disorders such as sickle cell disease.

Parents of children who have inherited anaemia or immune deficiency should seek advice from their doctors.

For more information about
Parvovirus B19 Infection contact:

*The Community Infection Control Nurse at your
local Primary Care Trust (PCT)*

or

your local Health Protection Unit

or

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics/index.htm>

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/northwest/factsheets/PARVOB19.pdf>

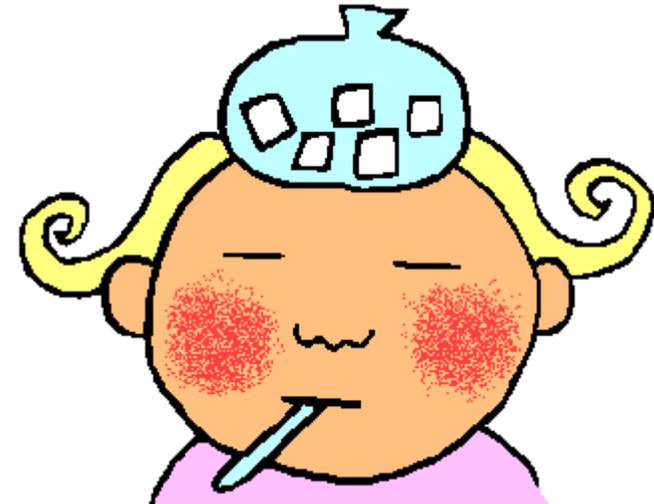
Information produced by: Health Protection Agency North West

Date: September 2007

Review Date: September 2009



HPA North West



Parvovirus B19 Infection (Slapped Cheek Syndrome) (Fifth Disease)

INFORMATION LEAFLET

What is parvovirus B19 infection?

Parvovirus B19 infection is a viral infection and symptoms include:

- High Temperature/Fever
- Rash - a lace-like red rash usually on the limbs and across the shoulders
- Red cheeks - this symptom is most common in children and is the reason for the infection's other name "*slapped cheek syndrome*"
- Joint aches and pains

Human Parvovirus B19 infection is also called:

- Slapped cheek syndrome
- Fifth disease
- Erythema infectiosum

It is not the same disease as parvovirus in pets.

How is parvovirus B19 caught?

- By being in **close personal contact** with someone who already has the infection.
- By breathing in the aerosol spray from an infected person via their coughing and sneezing.
- Rarely from direct contact with the blood or urine of someone who already has the infection.
- It is **not** caught from animals or inanimate objects like towels or from food.
- Infections are most common in the spring or early summer.

Who can it affect?

- **Usually children** The infection is most common in children between the ages of 5-14 years.
- **Some adults** Approximately half (50%) of all adults will have been infected at some time in their lives and have gained immunity.
-

Do you need to stay off school/nursery/work?

NOT USUALLY - Usually children will feel quite well. They only need to stay off school / nursery if they are ill. This is the same for adults, but adults do tend to be affected with symptoms more commonly, particularly joint pains and general aches.

- The incubation period (the period between initial exposure to the infection and the appearance of signs and symptoms) is between 4-20 days - average 14 days.
- A person developing the disease is infectious (capable of spreading the virus to other people) for 7 days before the onset of the rash
- Once the rash has appeared the risk of passing on the infection drops dramatically.

How do you prevent spread?

- This is almost impossible because people are infectious before they show symptoms of the infection and we do not, as yet, have a vaccine to prevent the infection occurring.
- Washing hands with soap and warm water after contact with urine or blood or after coughing or sneezing into hands is a sensible precaution.

Advice to pregnant women

After 20 weeks of pregnancy, there is no known risk to the baby.

Before 20 weeks, if you have had close contact with a case during the infectious period (before the rash appears) see your doctor, midwife or obstetrician. Your doctor may wish to consider testing for immunity or infection, and monitoring the baby.

The virus **does not** cause malformations in the baby in the way that German measles (rubella) can.