

Information regarding Fifth Disease (Ringo-byo: りんご病)

Fifth Disease, also known as slapped-cheek syndrome, is a contagious viral infection caused by the parvovirus B19. This virus spreads from person to person through fluids from the mouth and nose, usually when an individual sneezes or coughs. Symptoms usually begin anywhere from 4-20 days after infection.

Typically the illness is characterised by a distinctive red rash on both cheeks that makes the child appear to have a “slapped cheek.” Within a couple of days the rash spreads to the trunk, arms, and legs and appears to have a lacy, net-like appearance. The child may also develop a mild, low-grade fever. It may take 1-3 weeks for the rash to completely clear. Adults and older teens infected may also report joint pain. If you notice these symptoms in your child, you may want to consult with a physician to confirm the diagnosis. You should also consult your physician if symptoms are severe.

Children infected with Fifth Disease are most contagious before the rash appears. By the time the rash appears, the child is no longer contagious and may return to school.

In most cases Fifth Disease is a mild illness; therefore, treatment is usually not necessary. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be used for fever and joint pain. Do not give aspirin to children.

It is very important that pregnant women exposed to Fifth Disease contact their obstetrician. An antibody test will be performed and if antibodies against the illness are not present the pregnancy will be closely monitored.

We would advise that you check the following website for up-to-date information regarding this illness:

NHS Direct - <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Slapped-cheek-syndrome/>

If you have trouble accessing the website or would like any further information please contact the School Nurses:

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Best Regards,
The British School in Tokyo
Health and Safety Office