

[healthy children : Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/)

**Fifth Disease (erythema infectiosum)**

**What is fifth disease?**

* Viral infections that results in a distinctive rash
* Spread through contact with respiratory droplets – cough, sneeze, etc.
* Exposed child will develop the rash within 10-14 days
* Disease is contagious the week before the rash develops – therefore, avoiding contact with the infected individuals is very difficult
* Once rash is present, the child is no longer contagious (can go to school if fever-free)
* Outbreaks usually occur in later winter and early spring

**Symptoms:**

* Cold symptoms may be present before rash appears
* Bright red cheeks on both side for 1-3 days (“slapped cheek” appearance)
* Rash on cheeks is followed by pink “lacelike” rash on extremities
* “Lacy” rash mainly occurs on thighs and upper arms/shoulders
* Rash may also occur on chest and abdomen
* Rash is not itchy or painful
* No fever or low-grade fever less than 101 °F
* Lace-like rash may come and go for 1-3 weeks!

**Treatment:**

* No treatment is necessary!
* Rash is harmless and should cause no itch, pain, or complications

**When to call the office:**

* Your child has a history of anemia (low iron)
* Only one cheek is red
* Child has a fever greater than 101 °F
* Child is taking a new medicine when rash begins
* Sore throat for more than 24 hours

**\*\*The primary concern with fifth disease is for pregnant women. Fifth disease can be harmful to the unborn child. Please call your obstetrician immediately if you are pregnant and exposed to fifth disease\*\***