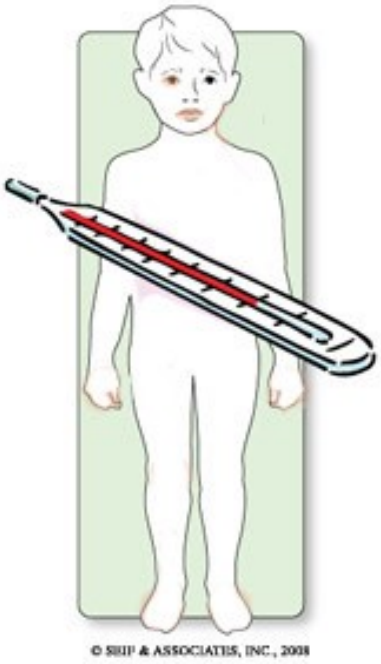
Fifth Disease
(Erythema Infectiosum)

Erythema Infectiosum is called fifth disease. It is a mild illness caused by a virus. This virus most commonly occurs in children. During the period before the rash, the patient usually has a low-grade fever, mild upper-respiratory symptoms, and a headache. Fifth disease also occurs in adolescents and adults. In this group it may cause arthritis (joint pain). The joint pain is usually in the hands, wrists, and ankles. Following the *prodrome* period a bright red rash appears on both cheeks. The rash has a "slapped cheek" appearance. After 1 to 3 days, a pink, lacy rash appears on the body, arms, and legs. This rash may come and go for up to 5 weeks. It often gets brighter following warm baths, exercise, and sun exposure. Your child may have no other symptoms or only a slight runny nose, sore throat, and very low fever. Complications are rare. This illness is quite harmless.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS:
- Treatment is not necessary. No vaccine is available.
- This disease is not very contagious. It is usually not necessary to keep your child away from other children.
- Pregnant women should avoid being exposed.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- An oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or the temperature remains high and is not controlled by medication.
- Your child seems to be getting worse.
- The rash becomes itchy.

MAKE SURE YOU:
- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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