Viral Exanthems, Child

Many viral infections of the skin in childhood are called "viral exanthems." Exanthem is another name for a rash or skin eruption. The most common childhood viral exanthems include the following:

- Enterovirus
- Echovirus
- Coxsackievirus
- Adenovirus
- Roseola
- Erythema Infectiosum (fifth disease)
- Chickenpox or varicella
- Epstein-Barr Virus (infectious mononucleosis)

DIAGNOSIS

Most common childhood viral exanthems have a distinct pattern to the rash and pre-rash symptoms. If a patient shows these typical features, the diagnosis is usually obvious and no tests are necessary.

TREATMENT

No treatment is necessary. Since your child's rash is caused by a virus, antibiotics will not help. The rash may be associated with minor sore throats, aches and pains, runny noses, watery eyes, tiredness, coughs. If this is the case, your physician may offer suggestions for treatment of your child's symptoms. Only give your child over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by their caregiver. **Do not give aspirin to your child.**

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF YOU NOTICE:

- Sore throat with pus, difficulty swallowing and swollen neck glands.
- Chills.
- Joint pains, abdominal pain, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 100.5º F (38.1° C) or higher for more than 1 day.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has severe headaches or neck pain.
- Severe headache or neck pain and stiffness.
- Persistent extreme tiredness and muscle aches.
- Persistent productive cough, shortness of breath, or chest pain.
- Your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 10/15/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.