



Photos taken from saisd.net, Sep 2012

## PARENT HANDOUT ON FIFTH DISEASE

**OVERVIEW:** Fifth disease is a mild rash illness caused by parvovirus B19. It is more common in children than adults. A person usually gets sick within 4 to 14 days after getting infected with parvovirus B19. About 20% of children and adults who get infected with this virus will not have any symptoms.

**SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:** The first symptoms of fifth disease are usually: fever, runny nose, and headache. After several days, you may get a red rash on your face. This is called "*slapped cheek*" rash. It is more common in children than adults. Some people may get a second rash a few days later on their chest, back, buttocks, or arms and legs (often lasting 7-

10 days). Could also develop swollen/painful joints in the hands, feet, or knees (often lasting 1-3 weeks).

**HOW IT'S TRANSMITTED:** Parvovirus B19 spreads through respiratory secretions (such as saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus) when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

**HOW IT'S DIAGNOSED:** Healthcare providers can often diagnose fifth disease just by seeing "*slapped cheek*" rash on a patient's face. A blood test can also be done to determine if you are susceptible or immune to parvovirus B19 infection or if you were recently infected

**PREVENTION & TREATMENT:** You can reduce your chance of being infected

with parvovirus B19 by: washing your hands often with soap and water, covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, not touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, avoiding close contact with people who are sick, staying home when you are sick. Fifth disease is usually mild and will go away on its own. Healthy children and adults usually recover completely. Treatment usually involves relieving symptoms, such as fever, itching, joint pain, and swelling.

**COMPLICATIONS:** Fifth disease is usually mild for children and adults who are otherwise healthy. But, for some people, fifth disease cause serious health complications.

### BOTTOM LINE:

- \* There is no vaccine or medicine that can prevent parvovirus B19 infection.
- \* The face rash is the most recognized feature of fifth disease.
- \* People with fifth disease are most contagious before they get rash or joint pain and swelling.
- \* Fifth disease got its name because it was fifth in a list of historical classifications of common skin rash illnesses in children
- \* For information visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/parvovirusB19/fifth-disease.html>

