



Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have recently been exposed to fifth disease, also known as erythema infectiosum or “slapped cheek disease.” Fifth disease is a mild illness that occurs most commonly in children.

Symptoms usually appear 4 to 20 days after exposure. Fifth disease may begin with a mild fever, malaise, or cold-like symptoms. A few days later a bright red rash appears on the cheeks that make the cheeks appear to have been “slapped.” A lacy net-like appearance red rash may also appear on the arms, legs, and trunk. The rash may be accompanied by itching. It usually resolves in 7 to 10 days, but may recur for 1 to 3 weeks upon exposure to heat or sunlight. Fifth disease is spread from person-to-person during the early part of the illness by having contact (via used tissues, mouthed toys, drinking cup, utensils, etc.) with saliva or mucus from an infected person. Once the characteristic “slapped cheek” rash appears, a person is no longer contagious. You can help prevent the spread of this illness by making sure all family members wash their hands thoroughly, especially after wiping noses or handling used facial tissues.

Fifth disease is not a serious illness. Children diagnosed with fifth disease do not need to be excluded from child care or school as they are no longer infectious once the rash appears. If you or any of your household members are pregnant, have sickle-cell anemia or chronic anemia, or have an immune deficiency, contact your health care provider. Also, if your child develops symptoms of fifth disease, please notify your child care provider. If you have any questions, call the Snohomish Health District’s Communicable Disease Outreach program at 425.339.5278.

*This letter was printed from the Snohomish Health District’s website. If your child’s caregiver has provided you with this notice and you have additional questions, call Communicable Disease Outreach at 425.339.5278. This letter is reviewed annually. This document is not valid after 06/2012.*