

Advice to other groups

The infection may be more serious for people who have diseases which impair their immune system and for people who have certain serious blood disorders such as sickle cell disease.

Parents of children who have inherited anaemia or immune deficiency should seek advice from their doctors.

For more information about
Parvovirus B19 Infection contact:

The Community Infection Prevention & Control Nurse
or
your midwife or obstetrician
or
your local Health Protection Unit
or
<http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics>

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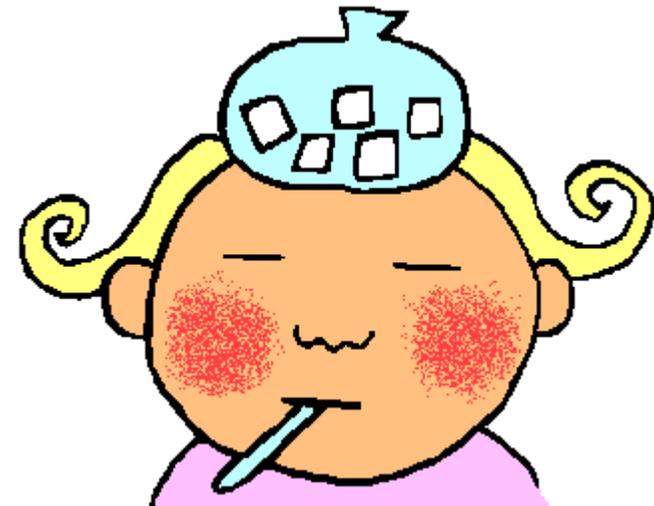
The Health Protection Agency North West,
North West Infection Prevention & Control Nurses
and
North West Environmental Health Officers.

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INFORMATION LEAFLET

What is parvovirus B19 infection?

Parvovirus B19 infection is an illness caused by a virus (germ).

Human Parvovirus B19 infection is also called:

- Slapped cheek syndrome
- Fifth disease
- Erythema infectiosum

It is not the same disease as parvovirus in pets.

What are the symptoms of parvovirus B19?

Symptoms include:

- High temperature/ mild fever
- Rash - a lace-like red rash usually on the limbs and across the shoulders
- Red cheeks - this symptom is most common in children and is the reason for the infection's other name "*slapped cheek syndrome*"
- Joint aches and pains

How is parvovirus B19 caught?

- By being in **close personal contact** with someone who already has the infection.
- By breathing in the virus from an infected person via their coughing and sneezing.
- Rarely from direct contact with the blood or urine of someone who already has the infection.
- It is **not** caught from animals, objects like towels or food.

Who can it affect?

- **Children** The infection is most common in children between the ages of 5-14 years.
- **Adults** Approximately half of all adults will have been infected at some time in their lives and will have gained immunity / protection.

Do you need to stay off school/nursery/work?

NOT USUALLY - generally children will feel quite well and only need to stay off school / nursery if they are feeling ill. Adults do tend to be affected with symptoms more commonly, particularly joint pains and general aches.

- The incubation period (the period between initial exposure to the infection and the appearance of signs and symptoms) is between 4 - 20 days (average 14 days).
- A person developing the disease is infectious (capable of spreading the infection to other people) for 7 days **before** the onset of the rash
- Once the rash has appeared the risk of passing on the infection drops dramatically.

How do you reduce spread of parvovirus B19?

- This is almost impossible because people are infectious **before** they show symptoms of the infection and there is no vaccine to prevent the infection.
- Washing hands with soap and warm water after contact with urine, blood or after coughing or sneezing.

Advice to pregnant women

Before 20 weeks, though the risk is low, if you have had close contact with an infected person during the infectious period (before the rash appears) see your doctor, midwife or obstetrician. Your doctor may wish to consider testing for immunity or infection, and monitoring the baby.

After 20 weeks, there is no known risk to the baby.

The virus **does not** cause malformations in the developing baby in the way that German Measles (Rubella) can.