



# MEMO

Human Resources Department  
Lindsay Board Office  
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**S.O. MEMO:** SO-0022  
**TO:** All Principals and Office/Site Managers  
**FROM:** Earl Manners, Human Resources Administrator  
**DATE:** September 27, 2010  
**RE:** Fifth Disease Reporting

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Parvovirus B-19 (commonly known as Fifth Disease), if contracted by a pregnant woman, can pose serious risk to the unborn child. Fifth Disease is a viral infection, common in elementary school-aged children, and is characterized by bright-red cheeks, fever and rash. Please see the attached Fact Sheet for more information.

**If you become aware of a confirmed case of Fifth Disease at your worksite:**

(A confirmed case of Fifth Disease is considered as such once a doctor's note has been received confirming the student has Fifth's disease, or a parent advises their child has seen a doctor and Fifth's disease is confirmed).

- Please post a notice in a visible location and on your school/worksite conference, advising of the confirmed case, as soon as possible.
- The notice can be removed after 20 calendar days with no further confirmed cases. With each new confirmed case the 20 calendar day count starts again.
- Contact Attendance and Disability Management Officer, Kerrie Wright, at the Lindsay Corporate Office, (by phone, extension 22143 or by email) if you have a confirmed case, so that an alternative work location(s) can be arranged for any pregnant staff. Whenever possible, employees who normally work in a school will be assigned to another school rather than one of the board offices.
- Principals should also contact their Area Superintendent.
- The Board will make every effort to accommodate any pregnant staff by offering appropriate work at an alternate work location until such time as she has been authorized by her doctor to return to her own worksite.
- If you have a pregnant woman on staff, she should be advised to contact her doctor immediately for a blood test. A blood test is usually done to determine if she is immune to the disease and these results should be known within one to two weeks. **A medical note confirming she is immune or not is required.**

- It is expected that the staff member will be unable to report for work at your worksite until the test results are known.
- During the interim period, until modified work has been arranged by the Attendance Officer, the staff member is to continue to be paid.
- **In the case of a Teacher or Educational Assistant, a new absence code has been created – FIFTH.** Any other staff member similarly affected would also continue to be paid, and this absence should be shown on the timesheet as “**D – Other**” with an appropriate explanation in the comments section.
- In all instances this period of absence would not be chargeable to the individual’s sick leave.
- Please note that in the event the employee declines the offer of an alternate work placement, any subsequent days from that point forward are to be coded as illness and the days will be charged to the individual’s sick leave.
- Teacher’s on LTO assignment who are pregnant:
  - Must follow the same procedure as permanent teachers;
  - Must do all preps, lesson plans and marking for job at alternate school.
  - **Supply coming in to cover LTO must not work more than 13 consecutive days.**

If you require further clarification, please contact Kerrie Wright, Attendance and Disability Management Officer, at the Lindsay Corporate Office (705-324-6776 ext. 22143).

cc: Senior Administration  
Lynn Raback, President, CUPE local 997  
Steve Colliver, President, TLETL  
Tracy Blodgett, TLOTL  
Peter Carroll, President OSSTF Trillium Lakelands District 15  
HR News  
TLDSB News

# FIFTH DISEASE – FACT SHEET

## **What is fifth disease?**

Fifth disease is a viral infection which often affects red blood cells. It is caused by a human parvovirus (B19). For many years, fifth disease was viewed as an unimportant rash illness of children. Recently, studies have shown that the virus may be responsible for serious complications in certain individuals.

## **Who gets fifth disease?**

Anyone can be infected, but the disease seems to occur more often in elementary school-age children.

## **How is the virus spread?**

The virus is spread by exposure to airborne droplets from the nose and throat of infected people.

## **What are the symptoms and when do they appear?**

One to two weeks after exposure, some children will experience a low grade fever and tiredness. By the third week, a red rash generally appears on the cheeks giving a slapped face appearance. The rash may then extend to the body and tends to fade and reappear. Sometimes, the rash is lacy in appearance and may be itchy. Some children may have vague signs of illness or no symptoms at all.

## **When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?**

People with fifth disease appear to be contagious during the week prior to the appearance of the rash. By the time the rash is evident, the person is probably beyond the contagious period. People who are immunosuppressed or who have certain anaemia's may be contagious for a longer period.

## **How is fifth disease diagnosed?**

In most cases, the disease is diagnosed based on the appearance of typical symptoms. A specific blood test to confirm the diagnosis has recently become available but is not necessary in healthy children.

## **Does past infection with the virus make a person immune?**

It is thought that people who have been previously infected acquire long-term or lifelong immunity. Studies have shown that more than 50 percent of adults are immune to parvovirus B19.

## **What is the treatment?**

At this time, there is no specific treatment.

## **What are the complications associated with fifth disease?**

While there is no evidence that parvovirus B19 infection is a significant cause of fetal defects, some studies have shown that infection may increase risk of miscarriage or spontaneous abortion. In people with chronic red blood cell disorders, such as sickle-cell disease, infection may result in severe anaemia. Infection has also been associated with arthritis in adults.

## **What can be done to prevent the spread of fifth disease?**

Measures to effectively control fifth disease have not been developed yet. During outbreaks in schools, pregnant school employees and people with chronic red blood cell disorders should consult their physician and the local or state health department for advice.

## **What should I do if I am exposed to a child with fifth disease during my pregnancy?**

If you are exposed to a case or develop symptoms of fifth disease while pregnant, you should consult your doctor. Blood testing is available to determine if you are already immune or infected with parvovirus B19.