

COMMACK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Commack, New York 11725

North Ridge Primary School
Townline Road
Commack, New York 11725

Katherine M. Rihm
Principal

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Dear Parent/Guardian of Students in North Ridge Primary:

There has been a case of Fifth Disease in your child's school. This does not require exclusion from school of the infected child. The reverse side of this letter describes Fifth Disease in detail.

Because of your child's exposure, it is recommended by the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, that if you are pregnant or suspect you are pregnant, you should contact your obstetrician.

Sincerely,
Katherine M. Rihm
Principal

FIFTH DISEASE

Fifth Disease is an acute viral illness that appears with a bright red or rosy rash on both cheeks for one to three days (“slapped cheek” appearance). The rash on the cheeks is followed by a pink “lacelike” rash on the extremities, which comes and goes several times over one to three weeks. There is either no fever or a low grade fever.

CAUSE: Fifth Disease is caused by the human parvovirus B19.

EXPECTED COURSE: This is a very mild disease with either no symptoms or a slight runny nose and sore throat. The “lacelike” rash may come and go for five weeks, especially after warm baths, exercise and sun exposure.

TREATMENT: No treatment is necessary. This distinctive rash is harmless and causes no symptoms that need treatment.

CONTAGIOUSNESS: Over 50% of exposed children will come down with the rash in ten to fourteen days. Because the disease is mainly contagious during the week before the rash begins, a child who has the rash is no longer contagious and does not need to stay home from school.

ADULTS WITH FIFTH DISEASE: Most adults who get Fifth Disease develop just a mild pinkness of the cheeks or no rash at all. Adults develop joint pains, especially in the knees, more often than a rash. These pains may last one to three months.

PREGNANT WOMEN EXPOSED TO FIFTH DISEASE: If you are exposed to a case or develop symptoms of Fifth Disease while pregnant, you should consult your doctor. Blood testing is available at some private laboratories and at the New York State Health Department laboratory to determine if you are already immune or infected with parvovirus B19.

If you have any further questions, you should contact your family physician.