

HEALTH & SCIENCE

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Fifth disease puts pregnancies at risk

As the school year approaches, women not previously infected with Parvovirus B19, or "fifth disease", should be made aware of the risk of miscarriage or stillbirth if they should contract this common childhood illness. Schools are breeding grounds for fifth disease, making pregnant teachers and parents of school-age children most at risk. An FDA-approved test is available to establish whether a woman has immunity.

Women previously infected are not at risk. However, those never infected have a 30% risk of becoming so if exposed and a 5% to 9% risk of losing their child if they become infected.

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