

Facts for Education Community

What is Fifth Disease?

- Caused by a virus called Parvovirus B19, **fifth disease** commonly infects children and typically causes a mild rash that may resemble a “slapped-cheek.”
- Complications may arise if contracted when pregnant or immuno-compromised (a weak immune system), but viral infection has no lasting effects on healthy children and adults

Fifth Disease and Pregnancy

- Studies have shown that **fifth disease** may infect the fetus and increase the risk of miscarriage within the first 20 weeks of pregnancy
- Risk of fetal death following maternal Parvovirus B19 infection during pregnancy is 10%
- Parvovirus B19 infection is estimated to cause 3000 fetal deaths annually in the EU; a similar rate can be expected for North America

Fifth Disease in Schools

- Most infections occur in children between 5 and 14 years of age, often leading to outbreaks in schools
- Given the potential for serious complications for pregnant women, including teachers and school nurses, these at-risk groups should visit their doctor to determine their immunity to the disease before possible exposure to an outbreak



The Importance of Testing

- A simple blood test can determine whether pregnant women are at risk
- American College of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians (ACOG): "Pregnant Women exposed to Parvovirus B19 should have serologic screening to determine if they are at risk for seroconversion" [the development of detectable specific antibodies as a result of infection]

Treatment if Infected with Fifth Disease/Parvovirus B19

- If pregnant, ACOG recommends weekly ultrasounds for at least 10 weeks to monitor for infection
- Intrauterine transfusion can be performed if the baby shows signs of severe anemia
- For non-pregnant faculty, no treatment is necessary, as there is no lasting effect on healthy children and adults. However, you should immediately inform your institution in the interest of other at-risk members of the faculty and the community.

For more information

- Visit :

www.fifthdisease.org

- Consult with your doctor.

