



Achieving Success Together

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DATE: January 13, 2009

MEMO TO: PRINCIPALS, SUPERINTENDENTS, UNIONS, FEDERATIONS  
FROM: ANNE HUSKA

RE: **FIFTH DISEASE**

There have been a number of inquiries about the protocol for Fifth's Disease. Fifth Disease (Parvovirus B19) is a virus that commonly infects children. A "slapped-cheek" rash appears on the face and a lacy red rash on the trunk and limbs. The child is usually not very ill, and the rash resolves in 7 to 10 days. Once recovered, the child is protected against future infection. An adult with no immunity can be infected, become ill with a rash or joint pain/swelling. 20% of adults and children get no symptoms at all.

For the most part there is no serious complication for a pregnant woman or her baby because of exposure to someone with Fifth Disease. Pregnant staff may wish to seek the advice from their doctor regarding their immunity and possible risk. There is a blood test available which will indicate immunity or not. This disease may cause complications to an unborn baby but this occurs in less than 5% of all pregnancies. The Centre for Disease Control, the Ontario Medical Association and the regional health units do not recommend that pregnant women be excluded from a workplace where a Fifth Disease outbreak is occurring - this would have to be a personal decision by the employee.

Fifth Disease outbreaks usually start late in the year and, if there are outbreaks in schools, there are outbreaks in the community at large.

Staff may access their sick leave while awaiting immunity status by providing a medical note to the Board. This absence should be treated as a self-imposed quarantine and the employee should remain at home to avoid public exposure.

As a standard precaution to any disease, good hygiene is encouraged by frequent handwashing.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (Ext. 4262)