



## **Fifth Disease & Pregnancy**

Fifth Disease is a mild viral infection common among elementary school children. It is caused by parvovirus B-19 and may pose a low risk to the fetus of exposed pregnant women, especially those in the first half of their pregnancy. By the time of diagnosis, symptomatic individuals are no longer infectious and the risk of exposure in the community at large may be just as significant as that of the workplace, especially if there are young children at home. Frequent hand washing is recommended as a practical and probably effective method to reduce the spread of parvovirus B-19.

All women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant should see their physician to discuss Fifth Disease and to request blood work to determine immunity to the disease.

### PROCEDURE:

In the event that a case of Fifth Disease is diagnosed by a physician and reported to the principal, the following steps should be taken:

- The principal will inform all staff members that there is a confirmed case of Fifth Disease in the school. Pregnant staff members with unknown immunity status will be advised to see their physician and to request a blood test to confirm immunity. This should be submitted to the Provincial Lab with a priority status (STAT)
- While awaiting test results, pregnant employees who work in a classroom with an outbreak of Fifth Disease **will be assigned to alternate duties**. Sick day credits will be deducted for absence from work if after consultation with her physician, the employee chooses not to accept these alternate duties.
- Once immunity is confirmed, the employee can return to her regular classroom duties.
- If a pregnant employee is not immune, the alternate assignment will continue to be available. Once the classroom has been free of any new confirmed cases of Fifth Disease for sixteen calendar days, the employee will return to her regular duties.

This procedure is in keeping with Board Policy 6.54 “Communicable, Infectious or Contagious Diseases and the Health & Safety of Staff and Students”. For further information refer to the School Health Manual, Section 4, Communicable Diseases.

### References:

Health Line Peel  
905-799-7700  
[www.region.peel.on.ca](http://www.region.peel.on.ca)

Mother Risk Program  
Hospital for Sick Children  
416-813-6780  
[www.motherrisk.com](http://www.motherrisk.com)