



Growing Together For Success

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Dear Parents/Caregivers

Attached is an information sheet regarding Slapped Cheek (fifth disease). Slapped cheek has appeared in one of our classrooms of our Tipu department.

As a precaution, we recommend you read the information on the reverse of this letter and check to see if your child has symptoms of this infectious condition.

If you require more information contact your GP or contact Healthline on <http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/healthline> or 0800 611 116.

Christine Chadwick
Principal



Information Sheet

Slapped Cheek (fifth disease)

Slapped cheek most commonly affects children under 10 years of age. Some adults may get it if they are not immune from childhood.

How is slapped cheek spread?

Slapped cheek is passed on in droplets from the respiratory tract of an infected person, mainly by close contact, coughing and sneezing. Once infected the time until symptoms appear is between 4 and 20 days. If you catch slapped cheek, you'll be infectious for 5 or 6 days before the first symptom appears. You'll stop being infectious once the rash appears.

Slapped cheek rapidly spreads through schools and childcare facilities and is most common during winter and spring.

What to do

Although there is no specific treatment for slapped cheek, you can keep your child comfortable by:

- Go to the doctor
- Let your child have plenty of rest
- Give paracetamol to relieve fever
- Use cold cloths to relieve discomfort of hot cheeks
- Make sure they drink plenty of water

Symptoms

Early symptoms may include:

- Low-grade fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Body ache
- Sore throat
- diarrhoea

After 3–7 days these symptoms improve and a rash develops. This starts with firm, bright red cheeks that are burning hot ('slapped cheek'). A fine, red, lace-like rash then develops on the child's body, arms and legs. The rash may be itchy and may seem to fade and then flare up when the child is hot or upset. The rash usually lasts for 2 weeks but may last up to 6 weeks.

Prevention

As slapped cheek is infectious before it is diagnosed, keeping your child home from preschool or school will not prevent the spread of the disease.

If you are exposed to slapped cheek, try to stop it spreading by making sure you and your children:

- wash your hands frequently
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Do not share food, eating utensils and drink bottles