FIFTH DISEASE  
(ERYTHEMA INFECTIOSUM, PARVOVIRUS B19 INFECTION)  
(Note special precautions for Child Care Staff)

* What is Fifth Disease?

Fifth Disease is a mild, contagious viral infection occurring in children, characterized by a distinctive rash. It tends to occur more in winter and spring.

**Incubation Period:** (Time from exposure to infection to beginning of symptoms of illness).
4 - 14 days, but as long as 21 days.

**Period of Communicability:** (Period person can give infection to another).
Most infectious before onset of rash and probably not communicable after onset of rash.

* What are the Symptoms of Fifth Disease?

Often the first symptoms are fever, fatigue, muscle aches and headache. This is followed by characteristic bright red rash on cheeks (slapped face appearance). A lace-like red rash occurs on chest and back and then it moves to arms and legs. This rash may fade and then reoccur for 1 – 3 weeks.

* How is Fifth Disease Spread?

This disease is spread by contact with the infected person’s respiratory secretions from coughing, sneezing and contaminated hands.

* How is Fifth Disease Treated?

For most children, only supportive care for symptoms is needed. Make sure child is not too hot, is kept out of the sunlight and drinks enough fluids.

* How Can the Spread of Fifth Disease be Prevented/Limited in Child Care Center?

Spread of Fifth Disease can be limited by frequent and complete hand washing by children and staff, by proper disposal of facial tissues containing respiratory secretions, by frequent cleaning and disinfecting of shared articles (e.g. toys, table tops, etc.) and by practicing good health habits.

* Other Comments/Suggestions

- Inform parents of other enrolled children who may have been exposed.

- Educate parents, staff, and children about disease, how it is spread, prevention methods and the need for good personal hygiene habits.

- Transmission may be limited by practicing good hand washing technique and proper disposal
of facial tissues containing respiratory secretions. Children should also avoid sharing eating utensils. When washing hands, use soap, rubbing hands together for 20 seconds and rinse in running water.

* **Exclusion**
Because children are no longer contagious when the rash appears, there are no restrictions. Exclude child if fever is present or if child does not feel well enough to participate in usual activities.

* **SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS**

     **Non-immune**, pregnant women should avoid exposure to potentially infectious persons. Susceptible staff who are pregnant, or who might become pregnant and have continued close contact to children with this infection, should be advised of the potential for acquiring the infection and the risk to the fetus. These women need to discuss this issue with their physician.

Women who are exposed to children either at home or at work are at increased risk of infection with this virus. Because of the widespread inapparent infections in both adults and children, all women are at some degree of risk of exposure, particularly those with school-aged children. In view of the high prevalence of this virus, the low incidence of ill effects on the fetus, and the fact that the avoidance of child care or teaching can only reduce but not **eliminate** the risk of exposure, routine exclusion of pregnant women from the workplace where this virus is occurring is not recommended.