

Title	FIFTH DISEASE PROCEDURE – EMPLOYEES	Independent Procedure No.	9051
Department	ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES - HUMAN RESOURCES		
Resources	Education Act Health Protection and Promotion Act Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Ontario Human Rights Code Occupational Health and Safety Act	Effective Date	2013 Jan. 07

The Thames Valley District School Board (hereinafter the “Board”) is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy work environment for its employees in accordance with the Education Act, Health Protection and Promotion Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Ontario Human Rights Code and the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- Taking every reasonable precaution to prevent the transmission of FIFTH DISEASE to a susceptible pregnant employee or an employee with a chronic blood disorder or depressed immune system.

This procedure is to be followed to reduce the spread of infection among staff and students. Additional information about FIFTH DISEASE is available from the local Public Health Units at:

www.healthunit.com (Middlesex, London) 663-5317, ext. 2330
www.elginhealth.on.ca (Elgin) 631-9900
www.oxfordcounty.ca/Health (Oxford) 539-9800

or link from the Board’s website under the Disability Management icon.

1.0 General Guidelines

- 1.1 FIFTH DISEASE, also known as erythema infectiosum (EI) or “slapped cheek syndrome,” is a very common viral infection of the respiratory system caused by parvovirus B19. FIFTH DISEASE is a common infection in child care settings, schools, and in the general community.

Administered By	Organizational Support Services - Human Resources
Date of Last Amendment	

- 1.2 **SYMPTOMS:** Most children with FIFTH DISEASE have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. Often, the infection starts with a mild fever or cold followed by a red rash on the cheeks, giving the appearance of “slapped cheeks”. One to four days later, a lace-like rash spreads to the torso, arms, and rest of the body. The most common symptom in adults is joint pain. 20-25% of adults with FIFTH DISEASE will be asymptomatic (without symptoms).

- 1.3 **TRANSMISSION:** FIFTH DISEASE spreads from person to person the same way as the common cold with droplets from mouth and nose. People with FIFTH DISEASE are most infectious before the onset of rash, therefore it is not necessary to isolate or exclude someone with FIFTH DISEASE because it will not prevent the spread of infection.

Transmission can be reduced through good hand hygiene practices, covering the nose and mouth when coughing, not sharing drinking/eating utensils, and proper disposal of used facial tissue. Over 50% of adults have had FIFTH DISEASE in childhood and will not get it again.

2.0 High Risk Employees

- 2.1 FIFTH DISEASE can lead to health problems for susceptible pregnant employees and for persons with chronic blood disorders or depressed immune systems. These employees should consult with their health care provider about the risks of FIFTH DISEASE.

Susceptible employees who have medical conditions that increase their risk for complications, should discuss the appropriate actions for work with their health care provider.

Pregnant employees and those planning pregnancy are advised to be tested to determine their immune status.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada clinical practice guidelines (No. 119, September 2002, pg. 6) state:

It is not recommended that policies be pursued to routinely send home women susceptible to infection.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, (“The Red Book” 2012, pg. 541), includes the following regarding FIFTH DISEASE in the workplace:

Routine exclusion of pregnant women from the workplace when EI (erythema infectiosum) or FIFTH DISEASE is occurring is not recommended.

3.0 Procedure

The following protocol has been developed to ensure that susceptible employees are provided guidance when FIFTH DISEASE has been confirmed in a Board school.

An employee who is immune will report to work.

A single case of FIFTH DISEASE in a school or work location may be an indication that there are other unrecognized cases. Therefore, Board personnel inform the appropriate Health Unit of the case. An information letter is provided by the Health Unit for distribution to staff and families.

When a case is reported in a Board school, a high risk employee is responsible for being tested at the earliest possible time. Employees, who are pregnant and have had exposure, should consult with their health care provider. The employee may use sick leave entitlement or personal leave in order to visit their health care provider and obtain the required test.

- Obtain a medical note stating how long the employee must be away from work. This will depend upon the medical condition present and/or the stage of the pregnancy.

Employees who are absent from work for the following reasons

- with the symptoms

or

- pregnant employees in the first half of pregnancy awaiting results of the blood test

or

- pregnant employees off work with a doctor's note

or

- have a chronic blood disorder or depressed immune system and are susceptible to FIFTH DISEASE

are to be coded on **TVARRIS as absent due to illness.**

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 The Principal, Manager or Supervisor is responsible to:

- Ensure that staff inform the Principal, Manager or Supervisor of suspected cases of FIFTH DISEASE.
- Request that staff and students with symptoms seek health care or follow up with health care provider.
- Ensure confidentiality for anyone who has the disease or any susceptible staff with related concerns.
- Inform the Health Unit of reported cases. The Health Unit may provide a letter for distribution to staff, students and families who may have had exposure.
- Notify staff, students and parents and visitors (staff from other agencies who provide services in our schools) of the presence of identified cases of FIFTH DISEASE and provide copies of FIFTH DISEASE policy as needed.
- Post a notice at all school entrances stating that FIFTH DISEASE has been identified.
- Inform a Disability Management Officer of the presence of identified cases of FIFTH DISEASE.
- Advise concerned employees to follow up with their health care provider.
- Provide the FIFTH DISEASE fact sheet as requested.

4.2 Disability Management Officer

- Will provide further information and guidance to employees.
- Inform TVARRIS of schools with FIFTH DISEASE and add an automated message about FIFTH DISEASE for those schools affected.
- Provide information about this TVDSB FIFTH DISEASE Procedure to family physicians as requested.
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- 4.3 **All Employees** who suspect that there is a case of FIFTH DISEASE in a class or school are required to report their observation to the Principal, Manager or Supervisor at the earliest possible opportunity, taking care to maintain confidentiality for any student, staff or community member concerned.

Attachments: FIFTH DISEASE Fact Sheet
 School Notice of FIFTH DISEASE

ALERT

Fifth Disease has been identified in this school

If you are pregnant or have a
chronic blood disorder or
are immuno-compromised please see
the Principal for a Fifth Disease fact sheet
or contact one of the Health Units listed below:

www.healthunit.com (Middlesex, London) 519-663-5317

www.elginhealth.on.ca (Elgin) 519-631-9900

www.oxfordcounty.ca/Health (Oxford) 519-539-9800

What You Need To Know about Fifth Disease and Pregnancy

What is Fifth Disease?

Fifth Disease is a mild rash illness caused by human parvovirus B19 that occurs most commonly in children but can infect adults as well.

Fifth Disease begins with a mild illness that may produce a fever, tiredness, muscle aches and a headache.

- The ill child typically has a "slapped-cheek" rash on the face and a lacy red rash on the trunk and limbs. This infection does not cause serious illness in most people and the rash resolves in 7 to 10 days.
- The ill adult can develop the typical rash and/or joint pain and swelling. The joint pain and swelling usually resolve.
- Symptoms generally appear between 4 and 14 days after exposure.

How is Fifth Disease spread?

The virus is found in the secretions of the nose and mouth. It is spread person to person by direct contact with these secretions, for example when sneezing and coughing or by touching a used facial tissue or sharing cups and utensils.

When is it contagious?

A person infected with parvovirus B19 is contagious to others before the rash appears. By the time the rash appears the person is no longer contagious.

Fifth Disease and Pregnancy: The Risk

- Women who have had Fifth Disease in the past will have antibodies to protect from getting Fifth Disease again. These women do not need to be concerned about it during pregnancy. About 50 percent of pregnant women are immune to Fifth Disease.
- There is some risk to the developing baby if a pregnant woman who is not immune to fifth disease is exposed during pregnancy.
 - In very rare cases the virus can disrupt the unborn baby's ability to produce red blood cells, sometimes leading to a dangerous form of anemia.
 - The risk is lower for exposures in the second half of pregnancy than in the first half.
- A blood test can be done to see if you are immune to the virus that causes Fifth Disease.

If you are pregnant and think you may have been exposed to Fifth Disease, consult your doctor.

Treatment

- There are no drugs to treat Fifth Disease.
- If a pregnant woman becomes infected, the doctor will continue to monitor the pregnancy for signs of problems. If there is any indication that the unborn baby

is developing complications, the doctor will determine the appropriate course of action.

Prevention

The women at highest risk of exposure to Fifth Disease are mothers with young children and those who work as teachers and childcare providers.

- Excluding people with Fifth Disease from work, childcare or schools is not likely to prevent the spread, since sick people are contagious before they develop the rash.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend that pregnant woman be routinely excluded from a workplace where a Fifth Disease outbreak is occurring.

To reduce the risk of infection, pregnant women should:

- Wash their hands thoroughly after touching tissues used by infected children and dispose of these tissues promptly.
- Avoid sharing drinking glasses or utensils with anyone who has or was exposed to the illness.

For additional information on Fifth Disease refer to the Middlesex-London Health Unit factsheet Fifth Disease.

For more information please contact Communicable Disease Division of the Middlesex-London Health Unit at (519) 663-5317 ext. 2330 or go to www.healthunit.com

Information adapted from:

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Parvovirus B19, in *Red Book: 2006 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases, 27th Edition*. Elk Grove, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics, pages 484-487.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. "Parvovirus B19 Infection and Pregnancy". Accessed May 15, 2008. www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/respiratory/B19&preg.htm

May 2008