



SECTION:	Human Resources General	APPROVAL DATE:
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POLICY NAME:	Fifth Disease Protocol	LAST REVISED:
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Fifth Disease is a mild viral infection common among elementary school children. It is spread from person to person through contact with respiratory secretions of an infected person and has an incubation period of 4 – 14 days.

There is no vaccine or medicine that prevents Parvovirus B19 infection. Frequent hand washing is recommended as a practical and probably effective method to reduce the spread of Parvovirus. Excluding persons with Fifth Disease from work, child care centers, schools, or other settings is not likely to prevent the spread of Parvovirus B19, since ill persons are contagious before they develop the characteristic scarlet lace rash.

The disease is most often not diagnosed until a rash appears on the child's face. The child is considered to be contagious up to the time that the facial rash develops but by the time the rash appears on the child's face and/or arms, the child is usually no longer contagious.

The affected child is not required to stay home from school. However the disease can be harmful to pregnant women who do not have immunity to the disease.

Several outbreaks of Fifth Disease have been reported in our schools over the past few years. In these cases, the most pressing concern is how to deal with pregnant staff in the school.

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, has provided information regarding the suggested course of action for potential exposure to Fifth Disease in schools/work locations. The recommendations outlined are based on the clinical guidelines of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada, which state, in part, "that leave from the workplace for pregnant women is not routinely recommended during an outbreak of the virus in the school". Pregnant women exposed to the virus should seek individual risk assessment with their physician.

PROTOCOL FOR PARVOVIRUS B19 (FIFTH DISEASE)

1. Once the disease has been diagnosed, all staff members must be notified that the disease is present in the school/work location and inform the Human Resources Department.
2. Signage must be placed in the Visitor Sign-In Book area.

3. It is the responsibility of staff members to consult with their respective physicians if they are concerned about their exposure to Fifth Disease.
4. Pregnant employees are encouraged to obtain the blood test that will confirm whether or not they have the antibodies against Fifth Disease. They should consult with their own doctor regarding the test. All employees are encouraged to contact their physicians during their pregnancy regarding their immunity status.
5. While awaiting the results of blood tests, employees will be contacted by the Disability and Wellness Coordinator and placed in a temporary assignment free from any known potential exposure to Fifth Disease.
6. Staff members whose physicians recommend that they stay at home will be granted sick leave with appropriate medical documentation. Leaves granted will be charged to the staff member's sick leave credit or if employees have insufficient sick leave, they will be granted unpaid medical leave. The decision will always be left to the employee and their doctor as to whether the employee should be working or not.
7. WSIB Implications – Employees who are absent from the workplace to prevent exposure to Fifth Disease are not eligible for coverage by WSIB. However, if an employee contracts the disease and is able to provide proof of exposure in the workplace, there may be entitlement to WSIB benefits. Parvovirus B19 is a mild disease and does not usually necessitate absence from work.