



DIRECTOR GENERAL

LETTER CIRCULAR

Information: X

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Action Required: X

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To: All Heads of School (State and Non-State) and Sections

From: Director General, Educational Services

Tel: 2598 2404

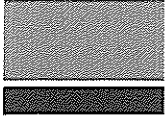
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Subject: Information Sheets re Slapped Cheek Syndrome

Kindly bring the attached information sheets to the attention of all parents.

Ms. Micheline Sciberras
Director General
Directorate for Educational Services



Slapped Cheek Syndrome

Slapped cheek syndrome is a viral infection that is most common in children, although it can affect anyone of any age. It usually affects children between the ages of 3 years and 15 years. Most cases develop during the late winter months or early spring. The most common symptom of slapped cheek syndrome is the appearance of a distinctive bright red rash on the cheeks.

What are the causes of slapped cheek syndrome?

Slapped cheek syndrome is caused by a virus called parvovirus B19. It is an airborne virus that is spread in much the same way as the cold or flu viruses. It can be spread through coughs and sneezes that release tiny droplets of contaminated saliva which are then breathed in by another person. It's very difficult to prevent the spread of the virus as people are most contagious before their symptoms begin, so they are unaware that they are infected. Once you've been infected you should develop a lifelong immunity and not experience any further symptoms.

Incubation period

Variable; 4 -20 days to development of rash.

Symptoms

The symptoms of slapped cheek syndrome usually begin in the first couple of weeks after your child is exposed to the virus. The symptoms tend to follow three distinct stages.

First stage

The first stage is usually characterised by mild flu-like symptoms, such as: fever, sore throat, headache, upset stomach, feeling tired and itchy skin. In many cases these symptoms do not occur, or are so mild as to be barely noticeable.

During the first stage of symptoms, your child will be most contagious.

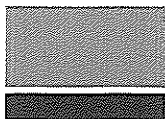
Second stage

Between three to seven days after the symptoms start, your child will develop a bright red rash on both cheeks (the so-called "slapped cheeks").

Third stage

The third stage of symptoms usually begins one to four days after the appearance of the "slapped cheek" rash. During this stage, the rash will usually spread to your child's chest, stomach, arms and thighs. The rash usually has a raised, lace-like appearance and may cause discomfort and itching. **By this time your child should no longer be infectious and they will be able to return to school without the risk of passing the infection to others.**





What treatment will your child need?

Most children will not need treatment as slapped cheek syndrome is usually a very mild condition that passes in a few days. Occasionally it can last up to four or five weeks.

Symptoms such as headaches, high temperature or itchy skin can usually be treated with over-the-counter medications. You will probably only need to contact your general practitioner if one or both of the following occurs:

- Your child's temperature rises to 39 ° C or above.
- Your child's symptoms suddenly worsen.

Preventing slapped cheek syndrome

To prevent the spread of slapped cheek syndrome try to make sure that everyone in your household washes their hands frequently in order to reduce the chances of the infection spreading. No vaccination is available.

Pregnant women

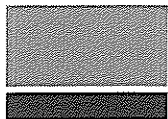
If a pregnant woman is exposed to a person suffering from slapped cheek syndrome during the infectious stage, it is advised that she informs the gynaecologist that she has been exposed to this virus.

For more information on the disease one can contact the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate on 23266000.

Yours truly,

Dr Charmaine Gauci MD, MSc, PhD, FRSPH, FFPH
Director, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate





Slapped Cheek Syndrome

Is-*Slapped Cheek Syndrome* hija infezzjoni virali li hi l-iktar komuni fit-tfal, għalkemm tista' taffetwa lil kulhadd f'kull eta'. Normalment taffetwa tfal ta' bejn it-3 u l-15-il sena. Hafna mill-każijiet jiżviluppaw matul ix-xhur tax-xitwa jew fil-bidu tar-rebbiegħa. L-iktar sintomu komuni tas-*slapped cheek syndrome* huwa d-dehra evidenti ta' raxx hamrani fuq il-haddejn.

X'jikkawża s-*Slapped Cheek Syndrome*?

Is-*Slapped Cheek Syndrome* huwa kkawżat minn vajrus li jissejjah *parvovirus B19*. Dan huwa vajrus li jittiehed mill-arja, bl-istess mod bhall-vajrus tar-riħ u l-influenza. Dan il-virus jista' jittiehed mis-soghla u mill-ghatis li jhallu qtar zgħar ta' bzieq ikkontaminat bil-vajrus, li mbagħad jiġi meħud bin-nifs minn persuna oħra. Huwa diffiċli hafna li wiehed iwaqqaf it-tixrid tal-vajrus għax in-nies ikunu l-iktar kontagjużi qabel ma s-sintomi ikunu jidhru. Għalhekk huma ma jkunux jafu li huma infettati. La darba tkun ġejt infettat b'dan il-vajrus, inti ġeneralment għandek tiżviluppa immunita' deġġiema, u m'għandekx terġax timrad b'dan il-vajrus.

Perjodu ta' Inkubazzjoni

Varjabbli; 4-20 ġurnata sa ma jiżviluppa r-raxx.

Sintomi

Is-sintomi tas-*Slapped Cheek Syndrome* jibdew fl-ewwel ftit ġimghat wara li t-tifla/tifel tiegħek tkun/ikun espost/a għall-vajrus. Is-sintomi normalment isegwu dawn it-tliet stadji.

L-Ewwel Stadju

L-ewwel stadju huwa normalment kkaratterizzat minn sintomi simili ta' riħ hafif, bħal: deni, uġiħ fil-grizmejn, uġiħ ta' ras, uġiħ fl-istonku, għejja, u ħakk. F'hafna każi, dawn is-sintomi ma jinhassux jew tant ikunu ħfief li bil-kemm jinhassu.

Matul l-ewwel stadju ta' dawn is-sintomi, it-tifla/tifel tkun/ikun l-aktar kontagġjuż.

It-Tieni Stadju

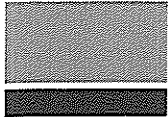
Bejn it-tielet u s-seba' jum wara li s-sintomi jkunu bdew, it-tifla/tifel tiżviluppa/jiżviluppa dehra evidenti ta' raxx hamrani fuq il-haddejn (magħrufa bħala *slapped cheeks*).

It-Tielet Stadju

It-tielet stadju ta' sintomi normalment jibda mill-ewwel sar raba' ġurnata wara li jkun deher ir-raxx tas-*slapped cheek*. Matul dan l-istadju, ir-raxx normalment jinfirx fuq is-sider, l-istonku, id-dirghajn u l-koxox tat-tifla/tifel. Ir-raxx normalment jinhass imqabbeż u qisu bizzilla u jista' jikkawża skumditu' u ħakk. **Sa dan l-istadju it-tifla/tifel mhux suppost tibqa'/jibqa' kontagġjuż/a u tkun/jkun tista'/jista' tirritorna/jirritorna l-iskola mingħajr ir-riskju li jgħaddi l-infezzjoni lil haddiehor.**

X'tip ta' kura għandha/ghandu bżonn it-tifla/tifel tiegħek?





Direttorat għall-Promozzjoni tas-Saħħa u Prevenzzjoni tal-Mard
Sovrintendenza tas-Saħħa Pubblika

Ministeru għas-Saħħa

Hafna tfal mhux se jkollhom bżonn kura għax is-*slapped cheek syndrome* hija normalment kundizzjoni hafifa hafna li tgħaddi fi ftit granet. Kultant tista' ddum sa erba' jew hames ġimgħat.

Sintomi bħal uġiġħ ta' ras, deni għoli, jew ħakk normalment jistgħu jiġu kkurati b'mediċini li jistgħu jinxtrow mingħajr ir-riċetta tat-tabib. Il-probabbiltà' hija li t-tabib tal-familja għandu jiġi kkuntattjat f'wieħed minn dawn il-każijiet jew it-tnejn li huma:

- It-temperatura tal-ġisem tat-tifla/tifel tiegħek toġhla għal 39°C jew iktar.
- Is-sintomi tat-tifla/tifel tiegħek imorru għall-aġħar f'daqqa.

Kif tilqa' għas-*Slapped Cheek Syndrome*

Biex wieħed jilqa' għat-tixrid tas-*Slapped Cheek Syndrome* inkoraġixxi lil kull individwu fid-dar jahsel idejh spiss sabiex inaqas iċ-ċans li l-infezzjoni tkompli tinfirex. Vaċċin kontra dan il-vajrus ma jeżistix.

Nisa Tqal

F'każ ta' mara tqila li għet esposta għall-persuna li qieghda tbat minn *Slapped Cheek Syndrome* waqt l-istadju infettiv, huwa rrakomondat li din għandha tinforma lill-ġinekologu li għet esposta għal dan il-vajrus.

Għal aktar informazzjoni dwar din l-marda cempel lid-Direttorat għall-Promozzjoni tas-Saħħa u Prevenzzjoni tal-Mard fuq 23266000.

Inselli għalik

Dr Charmaine Gauci MD, MSc, PhD, FRSPH, FFPH

Direttur, Direttorat għall-Promozzjoni tas-Saħħa u Prevenzzjoni tal-Mard



Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate

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