

## **What are the symptoms of slapped cheek disease?**

### **Rash**

Typically, the rash looks like a bright red scald on one or both cheeks. It looks as if the cheek(s) have been slapped. Sometimes there is just a blotchy redness on the face. The rash is painless.

Sometimes a more widespread faint rash appears on the body, arms and legs. Occasionally, the rash on the face and body keeps fading and returning several times for up to several weeks. However, it is more common for the rash to come and go completely within a few days.

### **Other symptoms**

Although the rash can look quite dramatic, the illness itself is usually mild. You will usually not feel too ill. You may have a headache, sore throat, runny nose or mild temperature (fever) that last for a few days and occur around 7-10 days before the rash appears. Occasionally, mild pain and stiffness develop in one or more joints for a few days. This is more common in adults than in children.

### **You may have no symptoms**

Around one in four people who become infected with this germ (virus) do not develop any symptoms at all. Some people just have a fever and feel generally unwell, without any rashes.

### **Are there any tests for slapped cheek disease?**

This condition is usually diagnosed by the appearance of the classical rash on your cheeks.

A blood test is sometimes performed. This will show if you have the disease and can also show if you have had this disease in the past. If you have had the disease in the past (even if you had it without developing any symptoms) then you will be immune to it.

### **Are there any complications from slapped cheek disease?**

Usually not. Rarely, the aching joint symptoms last for some time after the other symptoms have gone.

The only times the illness may become more serious are:

- In children with some types of hereditary anaemia such as [sickle cell disease](#), [beta-thalassaemia](#) and [hereditary spherocytosis](#). This germ (virus) can cause these types of anaemia to become suddenly much worse.
- In people with a weakened immune system. If you have leukaemia or cancer, have had an organ transplant or have HIV infection then you may develop a more serious illness with this infection.

### **What is the treatment for slapped cheek disease?**

You do not usually need any treatment. If you have a headache, high temperature (fever) or aches and pains then [painkillers](#) such as [paracetamol](#) or [ibuprofen](#) will help.

Those people who develop complications (which is very rare) may require other treatment.

### **Can slapped cheek disease be prevented?**

There is no vaccine or treatment that prevents this infection. Frequent hand washing reduces the risk of this infection being transmitted to other people.

You can still go to school (or work) if you have this infection, as you are only able to pass it on (are infectious) before you develop the rash. People infected with parvovirus B19 are considered non-infectious one day after the rash begins.