

Slapped Cheek Syndrome (Fifth disease or Parvovirus B19)

Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease) is common in children and should clear up on its own within 3 weeks. It's rarer in adults but can be more serious.

The first sign of slapped cheek syndrome is usually feeling unwell for a few days.

Symptoms may include:

- a high temperature of 38C or more
- a runny nose and sore throat
- headache

After 1 to 3 days, a bright red rash appears on both cheeks. Adults don't always get the rash



After 1 to 3 days with a cheek rash, a light-pink body rash may appear. The skin is raised and can be itchy

How long it lasts

The cheek rash normally fades within 2 weeks.

The body rash also fades within 2 weeks but sometimes comes and goes for up to a month – especially if you're exercising, hot, anxious or stressed.

Adults might also have joint pain and stiffness. This can continue for many weeks, even after the other symptoms have gone.

The NHS say there is no recommended period to be kept away from school/nursery once the rash has appeared, if your child is otherwise fit and well and showing no other symptoms they may attend school/nursery.

Things you can do yourself

You don't usually need to see a GP for slapped cheek syndrome. There are some things you can do to ease symptoms while it clears up.

Do

- rest
- drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration – babies should continue their normal feeds
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen for a high temperature, headaches or joint pain
- use moisturiser on itchy skin
- speak to a pharmacist if you have itchy skin – they can recommend the best antihistamine for children

Don't

- do not give aspirin to children under 16