

Childhood Febrile Rash Illnesses

Disease (Etiology)	Rash Description	Associated signs/symptoms	How transmitted (infectious period)
Parvovirus B19 aka Fifth Disease (Human parvovirus B19)	Facial rash can be intensely red with a “slapped cheek” appearance; Symmetrical red, bumpy, lace-like, itchy rash starts on torso and moves out towards arms, buttocks, and thighs	Mild early symptoms may include fever, malaise, muscle pain, headache occurs 7-10 days before rash onset	Transmission from droplets emitted from an infected person’s nose/mouth when they sneeze/cough, by direct contact with blood/blood products, and transmission from mother to fetus (contagious during the early part of the illness, before the rash appears)
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (various enteroviruses)	Mouth sores begin as small red spots that blister and may become ulcers; skin rash develops over 1-2 days with flat or raised red spots, sometimes with blisters; usually on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet; rash may also appear on the knees, elbows, buttocks or genital area	Early symptoms include fever, poor appetite, malaise and sore throat 1-2 days before mouth sores develop;	Transmission from droplets emitted from an infected person’s nose/mouth when they sneeze/cough and by fecal-oral transmission (respiratory tract shedding ≤ 1-2 weeks; fecal viral shedding for weeks or mos)
Chickenpox aka Varicella (Varicella-zoster virus)	Small bumps (papules) with evolve into fluid-filled blisters (vesicles); these become pus-filled (purulent) and eventually crust/scab over; rash can start on face or body and move outward	Early symptoms can be absent in children but can include headache, general body ache, backache and malaise; may have all forms of lesions at the same time	Transmission from droplets emitted from an infected person’s nose/mouth when they sneeze/cough, by direct contact, and by aerosolization of virus from skin lesions (2 days before – 5 days after rash onset or until lesions have crusted)
Measles aka Rubeola (Measles virus)	Flat red rash where individual macules may run together, may contain small solid bumps (papules); begins on face, neck and shoulders and spreads down the body and out towards the extremities; fades in 4-6 days	Early symptoms may consist of upper respiratory tract infection symptoms, runny nose, bark-like cough, malaise, light sensitivity, fever, and Koplik’s spots inside the mouth; rash generally develops on 4 th day of fever	Transmission from droplets emitted from an infected person’s nose/mouth when they sneeze/cough; can also pick up virus from contact with contaminated surfaces (4 days before – 4 day after rash onset)
Rubella aka German Measles (Rubella virus)	Flat pink rash where macules and papules develop on forehead and spread down/out within one day; rash fades in reverse order by third day; similar to measles rash, but less red	Early symptoms uncommon, especially in children though they may experience Forchheimer’s spots (small red spots aka petechiae) on the soft palate; adults may experience anorexia, malaise, conjunctivitis, headache, and mild upper respiratory symptoms before rash onset	Transmission from droplets emitted from an infected person’s nose/mouth when they sneeze/cough; can also pick up virus from contact with contaminated surfaces (7 days before – 7 days after rash onset)