

FactSheet

Para Su Información

Roseola (Exanthema Subitum)

What is roseola?

Roseola is a common rash illness of children ages 6 months to 2 years. The majority of cases are caused by Human herpesvirus-6B. Cases occur sporadically throughout the year and occasionally outbreaks do occur.

Who gets roseola?

Most commonly, the disease occurs in children between the ages of 6 months and 2 years of age. Infection in children less than 3 months or children over 4 years of age is uncommon.

How is the virus spread?

It is not fully known how the virus is spread, but research suggests that contact with the saliva of an infected individual may be the most likely source of infection.

What are the symptoms and when do they appear?

A fever, sometimes as high as 106 F, appears suddenly and lasts 3 to 5 days. Irritability, malaise and runny nose may be present at this time. A red throat with small lesions on the palate and tonsils and swollen lymph glands may be the only other significant symptoms. Children with roseola often have swollen eyelids giving them a “sleepy” appearance. The rash phase of roseola generally follows the disappearance of the fever. The rash is described as pale rose-pink spots and surrounded by a white halo. It starts on the trunk and later spreading to the neck, extremities and face lasting 24 to 48 hours. Symptoms usually last 5 to 7 days.

How is it diagnosed?

In most cases, the disease is diagnosed based on the appearance of the fever followed by a rash as described above. Blood testing is available for both virus and antibody detection.

When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?

The period of communicability is unknown.

Does past infection with the virus make a person immune?

Second cases of roseola are rare.

What is the treatment?

At this time there is no specific treatment.

What are the complications associated with roseola?

Symptoms are generally mild and most children are alert and playful despite high fever. Seizures occur in approximately 10 percent of cases having high fever.

What can be done to prevent the spread of roseola?

There is no vaccine available for roseola. Measures to effectively control roseola have not been developed. Generally speaking, children with fever or rash illness with fever should not return to a childcare setting or a preschool setting until their rash is gone and they are well.

Where can I get more information?

Contact your doctor or the Southern Nevada Health District, Office of Epidemiology at (702) 759-1300.



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