

What is it?

Roseola Infantum (Sixth Disease) is a viral infection that is common in infants and young children aged 6 to 24 months. It is rare in children under 4 months or over 4 years of age.

What are the symptoms?

Incubation period is usually 10 days but ranges from 5-15 days. Symptoms begin with a sudden high fever that can last anywhere from 3 to 5 days. In rare cases the fever may result in seizures. The fever is followed by a rash of small red or pink spots (with a lighter ring around them) on the face and the body that lasts up to two days. When touched, the spots turn white with a lighter ring around them.

How is it spread?

Roseola is transmitted by the saliva of an infected person (and not by the rash), even if the person is asymptomatic. The saliva can come from sneezing, coughing or touching someone who has saliva on their hands or body.

When is it contagious?

It is most contagious during the period of high fever before the rash appears. The infectious period is unknown as many adults have the virus present in their saliva, even if they were infected as children, and may spread the disease to infants.

How is it treated?

Roseola is difficult to diagnose until the rash appears. It does not usually cause serious problems and symptoms resolve without any treatment. If your child has a fever or a rash, seek medical attention.

Exclusion from a school or a child care centre is not necessary as long as the child is well enough to participate in daily activities.

Other Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or call our Communicable Disease Program at 613-966-5500 or 1-800-267-2803, ext. 349. | TTY Dial 711 (1-800-267-6511) | hpePublicHealth.ca

References

- Canadian Paediatric Society, Caring for Kids, May 2008
- Control of Communicable Disease Manual, David L. Heymann, 19th Edition.

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