Slapped Cheek Disease

Slapped cheek disease, also known as Fifth disease, is a common childhood viral infection. It is caused by the human parvovirus B19 and is called “slapped cheek disease” due to its characteristic red facial rash. It is sometimes called erythema infectiosum.

The disease mainly occurs in children and is usually mild. However, complications can occur in those with weakened immune systems and blood disorders.

If a woman contracts slapped cheek disease during the first half of her pregnancy, there is a small risk that the unborn child can develop a serious form of anaemia, or that the baby may miscarry. This occurs in less than 10% of pregnant women infected with the condition.

After infection with slapped cheek disease, lasting immunity to the condition is developed, protecting against future infection. It is estimated that by adulthood 50% to 70% of people have developed immunity to the condition.

Signs and Symptoms

Slapped cheek disease is usually a mild disease. Early symptoms can be vague and may be mistaken for the start of a cold. Symptoms may include:

- Mild fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Body ache
- Sore throat
- Upset tummy/diarrhoea

These may last for two or three days then subside or disappear altogether. Children then develop firm, bright red cheeks that are burning hot (“slapped-cheek”). Commonly a fine, red, lace-like rash then develops on the body, arms and legs. The rash may be itchy and may seem to fade then flare up when the child is hot or emotionally upset. The rash usually lasts for about two weeks, but may last for up to six weeks.

If adults develop the condition, they are less likely to have rashes but sometimes suffer swollen and painful joints, especially in the hands and feet. This joint pain usually only lasts for one to two weeks, but in severe cases may last for several months.

Transmission and Incubation Period

Once infection with the virus has occurred, the incubation period (the time until symptoms appear) is between four and 20 days. The person is infectious to others up to five or six days before the first symptoms appear, and stop being infectious to others once the rash appears.

Slapped cheek disease can be spread from person to person in airborne droplets or by direct contact with infected throat or nasal discharges. Coughing and sneezing are the most common modes of transmission.

The condition can spread rapidly through schools and childcare facilities and is most common
Homeopathic treatment for Slapped Cheek

during winter and spring. Epidemics of the condition tend to occur every three to seven years.

Diagnosis

Usually diagnosis is made based on clinical signs and symptoms. In an otherwise healthy child red, hot cheeks and a lacy rash are usually enough to indicate the condition.

Treatment

Most cases of slapped cheek disease require only supportive treatment. Because the condition is caused by a virus, antibiotics will be of no benefit in treating it.

Supportive treatment usually includes:

- Rest
- Homeopathic treatment to relieve fever & help alleviate the slapped cheek symptoms
- Cold flannels to relieve discomfort of hot cheeks
- Encouraging adequate fluid intake

Excerpts taken from web site:
http://www.southerncross.co.nz/AboutTheGroup/HealthResources/MedicalLibrary/tabid/178/vw/1/ItemID/118/Slapped-Cheek-Disease-Fifth-Disease.aspx

Homeopathic remedies to help alleviate symptoms for Slapped Cheek Disease.

- **Apis mellifica**—for skin rashes that feel hot and dry and are sensitive to touch; may be accompanied by sore throat; often the rash area is puffy & hard and can resemble a bee sting. The rash is stingy. Symptoms are relieved by cool drinks and baths and worsened by heat and warm liquids, they can have little or no thirst.

- **Belladonna** - when the condition comes on with a fast onset, the cheeks are very red with a radiating heat and can be accompanied by a high temperature & dilated pupils. Headache can be throbbing. May desire lemon or sharp flavoured drinks.

- **Calendula** – for burns and skin lesions that are fairly superficial; often used after the acute phase of the skin condition has subsided to aid in complete recovery.

- **Rhus toxicodendron** — used for rashes, blisters and vesicles accompanied by intense itching that worsens at night and improves with the application of heat; this remedy is most appropriate for individuals who are generally restless and unable to get comfortable at night. Often have desire for milk or milk products. Often restless & can’t get comfortable. Can affect tendons & ligaments & have painful joints.

- **Sulphur**—for skin disorders that are accompanied by fever and intense itching; this remedy is most appropriate for individuals who are thirsty, irritable while sick, lazy
and messy under ordinary circumstances, and who describe a sensation of internal heat and burning; symptoms tend to improve with open, cold air and worsen with warmth.

- *Urtica Urens* - for urticaria, also known as hives or nettle rash with reddish, scorching, stinging outbreaks on the skin that are likely to be distended or scratchy. usually worsen after bathing, or warmth. The itching is often worse in the morning.

If you have any queries or symptoms persist, please see your Homeopath or other health care professional.