



ROSEOLA (Exanthema Subitum)

Roseola is the most common viral rash illness that occurs in young children. It is sometimes referred to as Sixth Disease or, less commonly, “baby measles”. Roseola is caused by a virus called human herpesvirus 6 (HHV-6) and, possibly, human herpesvirus 7 (HHV-7).

Who gets this disease?

Roseola usually occurs in children aged 6 months to 2 years of age. It is uncommon for the disease to occur in children under the age of 3 months or over the age of 4 years. There is no known risk to pregnant women. Cases are not seasonal and usually occur throughout the year.

How is Roseola spread?

Humans are the only known source for roseola. It is not known how the disease is spread or what the infectious period is. It is not considered to be very infectious.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually begin 5-15 days after exposure.

What are the symptoms?

Roseola usually begins with a high fever that lasts 3 to 5 days followed by a rash that lasts 1-2 days. When the fever disappears, a rash appears, usually on the face and body. Irritability, runny nose, eyelid swelling and tiredness are sometimes present during the time of the fever. Most children, however, are alert and playful during this time.

How is it diagnosed and treated?

A healthcare provider diagnoses the disease based on the symptoms. A rash occurring immediately after the fever breaks is characteristic of the disease. The healthcare provider may recommend supportive treatment of symptoms but there is no treatment that is specific for roseola.

How can the spread of this disease be prevented?

There is no vaccine to prevent this disease. Generally, a child with a rash and fever should be excluded from childcare until seen by a healthcare provider. A child with a rash and no fever may return to childcare. There are no recommendations for preventive therapy for other children attending the childcare or for childcare personnel.

Reportable?

No. Roseola is not reportable by New Hampshire state law to the Division of Public Health Services, Communicable Disease Control Section. However, Public Health Professionals are available for consultation at (603) 271-4496 or 800-852-3345 ext. 4496.