

ROSEOLA

Roseola is a common rash illness that usually occurs in children under 4 years of age. It is the most common cause of rash in children 6 months to 2 years of age. Nearly all children have had roseola infection within the first 4 years of life.

CAUSE Human herpesvirus 6 (HHV-6). Cases of roseola due to human herpesvirus 7 can also occur.

SYMPTOMS Usually a high fever that appears suddenly and generally lasts 3 to 7 days. As the fever breaks, a rash appears on the trunk and neck and may later spread to the rest of the body. The rash may last from several hours to several days. At this time, the child usually does not feel very ill. Infection also occurs without symptoms in many children. Fever may cause seizures, which are the most common complication and reason for hospitalization among children.

Persons with weakened immune systems may have more severe disease and symptoms may last longer.

SPREAD Roseola is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes tiny droplets into the air and another person breathes them in. Also spread by touching contaminated objects and then touching one's eyes, nose, or mouth.

INCUBATION Estimated to be 9 to 10 days.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD Unknown, but most likely during the fever and before the rash appears.

EXCLUSION Childcare: Until fever is gone and other rash illnesses, especially measles, have been ruled out.

DIAGNOSIS Recommend parents/guardians call their health care provider if their child has fever and rash.

TREATMENT None.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with secretions from the nose or mouth, after handling used tissues, and before preparing or eating food. **Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.** If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled (see Section 2).

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at (612) 543-5230 or call your local health department.