

Roseola (roseola infantum)

Description

Roseola is a common viral illness, causing fever and a skin rash. The first symptom is typically a high fever (up to 40°C), which lasts from three to five days. Children may also experience a slightly reddened throat, runny nose and become tired and irritable.

The high fever often ends abruptly after about five days, and at this time a rash appears on the skin, usually on the chest, back, and abdomen, spreading down the neck and arms. The rash starts to fade after three days.

How does it spread?

Roseola is spread person to person in respiratory fluids and saliva, by direct contact with infected persons or items, and is commonly spread by coughing and sneezing.

Infectious period

It is not known exactly how long a person is contagious for. Once they are infected with the virus, the time until any symptoms appear is 10 days, with usual range of 5 – 15 days.

Exclusion period

Children should not attend the centre when they have an illness that prevents them from participating comfortably in the centre activities or requires extra attention from teachers.

Children with roseola symptoms that have had the rash diagnosed by a doctor and are well and may return to the centre.

Responsibilities of staff

- Tell parents that a child at the centre has roseola.
- Display information about roseola on your notice board.
- Encourage children to block their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their arm. Tissues should be placed in a rubbish bin and children should then wash their hands.
- Make sure staff and children's hands are washed often with soap and warm water, and are thoroughly dried to help prevent the spread of the virus.
- Wash all toys and surfaces with hot soapy water, and then disinfect with 1:10 dilute bleach. Disinfecting toys and general surfaces such as tables is a precaution for outbreaks, not a 'normal' procedure. When you don't have an outbreak make sure they are frequently washed with detergent.

Responsibilities of parents

- Keep your child home if they have a rash accompanied with fever, runny nose, tiredness and irritability.
- Get a doctor's diagnosis of the rash before bringing your child back to the centre.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for roseola, which is a viral infection. There are some medications that may relieve symptoms of discomfort. Antibiotics are not effective against roseola.