

Roseola (exanthum subitum, sixth disease)

Roseola is caused by a virus. It is a mild disease and is common in children aged 6 months to 3 years. It usually begins with a high fever that starts suddenly. The fever lasts 3 to 5 days and then a rash appears, usually as the child's temperature returns to normal. The rash is usually fine, raised, red spots and can last from several hours to several days. The rash first appears on the trunk of the body and spreads to the arms and legs. The rash turns white (blanches) when pressed.

How it spreads

Roseola spreads to others before symptoms appear in the infected child. Once your child has a fever and/or rash, they are no longer infectious.

Roseola spreads from person to person via droplets in the air that contain the virus. People get infected by:

- breathing in droplets when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes on them or near them
- direct contact with infected saliva (such as through sharing a cup or eating utensils)
- touching a surface contaminated with droplets – for example, hands, tissues or toys – and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Exclusion period

Not excluded – people with roseola can attend the service.

Actions for educators and other staff

Ensure staff and children have good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Ensure staff use appropriate cleaning practices, as described in the *Staying healthy* guidelines.

Actions for parents and carers

Keep your child at home until their fever has gone and they feel well.

Teach your child to cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue into a bin and wash their hands. If there are no tissues nearby, teach them to cough or sneeze into their inner elbow instead of their hands.

Make sure your child washes their hands thoroughly and often.

More information about roseola

See healthdirect for more information on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of roseola (healthdirect.gov.au/roseola-infantum).

To find out if a child needs medical help:

- use the online symptom checker (healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker)
- speak to a registered nurse by calling the 24-hour health advice hotline on 1800 022 222.