

The aim of the Poplar Grove Practice is to provide a high standard of holistic primary care to our entitled patients by working together as a cohesive multi-disciplinary team.

Our commitment to you, our patients, is to provide you with the highest possible standard of medical care with an efficiently run and friendly service. You will be treated as an individual with dignity, courtesy and respect at all times, irrespective of your ethnic origin, religious belief, sex or sexuality, personal attributes or the nature of your health problems. We expect to be treated in the same way.



Dr Wakeford & Partners

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Lines open daily between:

0800 - 1230 and 1400 - 1830



Patient Information Leaflet

Slapped Cheek Disease

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Slapped Cheek Disease

Slapped cheek disease is normally a mild, short illness. However, the rash may appear to be quite dramatic. No treatment is usually needed. However, it can cause harm to an unborn baby so women who are pregnant and come into contact with people who have this illness need to seek medical advice.

What is slapped cheek disease?

Slapped cheek disease is an infection which most commonly occurs in children aged 3-15 years but anyone can be affected. It can be passed on (it is infectious). The infectious period is for 4-20 days before the rash appears. By the time the rash develops, it is usually no longer infectious. In the UK, April and May are the peak months for this condition. However, it may occur at any time. You only have slapped cheek disease once in a lifetime. This is because you make antibodies during the infection which protect you from future infections with this same germ (virus).

What are the symptoms of slapped cheek disease?

Rash -Typically, the rash looks like a bright red scald on one or both cheeks. It looks as if the cheek(s) have been slapped. Sometimes there is just a blotchy redness on the face. The rash is painless. Sometimes a more widespread faint rash

appears on the body, arms and legs. Occasionally, the rash on the face and body keeps fading and returning several times for up to several weeks. However, it is more common for the rash to come and go completely within a few days.

Other symptoms

Although the rash can look quite dramatic, the illness itself is usually mild. You may have a headache, sore throat, runny nose or mild temperature that last for a few days and occur around 7-10 days before the rash appears. Occasionally, mild pain and stiffness develop in one or more joints for a few days. This is more common in adults than in children.

You may have no symptoms

Around one in four people who become infected with this germ (virus) do not develop any symptoms at all. Some people just have a fever and feel generally unwell, without any rashes.

Are there any complications from slapped cheek disease?

Usually not. Rarely, the aching joint symptoms last for some time after the other symptoms have gone.

The only times the illness may become more serious are:

- In children with some types of hereditary

anaemia such as sickle cell disease, beta-thalassaemia and hereditary spherocytosis. This germ (virus) can cause these types of anaemia to become suddenly much worse.

- In people with a weakened immune system. If you have leukaemia or cancer, have had an organ transplant or have HIV infection then you may develop a more serious illness with this infection.

What should pregnant women do?

Most pregnant women are immune to this germ (virus), or will not be seriously affected if they become infected by it. However, like some other viruses, the virus that causes slapped cheek disease can sometimes harm an unborn child. Miscarriage is more common in women who are infected with this virus before 20 weeks of pregnancy. If you develop a rash during your pregnancy or come into contact with a person with a rash then you should seek medical advice.

Your doctor will usually arrange for you to have a blood test to see if you have had slapped cheek disease in the past. If this is the case then you can be reassured and will not usually need other tests or treatment. However, if the test does not show that you have had slapped cheek disease in the past, you may need to have other blood tests and also other tests - for example, a scan of your unborn baby.