



Roseola

What is roseola?

Roseola is a common illness caused by a virus. Only infants and young children get roseola, usually between 6 months and 2 years of age. About 3 of every 10 children get roseola. When they do, the disease is usually mild. Many children get roseola and recover without feeling sick. Roseola normally appears in the spring and fall seasons.

What are the symptoms?

A child with roseola has a fever and their temperature rises suddenly, sometimes as high as 40°C (104° F). In a few cases, it may rise above 40°C (104° F). The rapid rise in temperature may cause seizures. Although seizures can be very scary, they should only last a few minutes, and do not do any harm. Your child's temperature should return to normal within 3 to 5 days.

About 24 hours after your child's fever has gone away, the roseola rash develops - small pink or red dots on the neck, chest, and body. The rash may be very faint or very obvious. In either case, the rash usually lasts about a day. One of the key features of roseola is that the rash appears after the fever has ended. In most other childhood illnesses the fever and the rash happen at the same time.

Although your child may go back and forth between feeling comfortable and acting upset, they usually eat and drink normally. Unlike other infections, there are no other symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, or a runny nose.

When should I call a doctor?

You cannot be sure your child has roseola until the fever goes away and the rash appears. If your child has a high fever and no other symptoms you should call your doctor. If your child seems to become sicker, has a high fever, a stiff neck, or is extremely sleepy, listless or irritable, take your child to the nearest emergency department right away. These symptoms may indicate a more serious illness.

You should always call your doctor if you are concerned about your child's illness. If your child has a seizure, call your doctor immediately.

If you are alone when your child has a seizure, turn them on their side to make sure they can breathe properly – then call your doctor. Do not leave your child alone. If you do not have a cell or portable phone, make sure your child is nearby while you make the call.

If this is the first time your child has had a seizure, and you cannot reach your doctor, take your child to the nearest hospital emergency room. A doctor will want to make sure that your child does not have a more serious illness.

How does roseola spread?

Roseola is spread through saliva and tiny droplets of fluid from the nose and throat of infected people when they talk, laugh, cough, or sneeze. It is not known how long children with roseola may be contagious to others.

Home treatment

Caring for your child may include:

- Keeping them comfortable. Keep clothing light - just a shirt and shorts or a diaper.
- Treating the fever. Your child should rest in bed until the fever is gone. If their temperature is high, give your child acetaminophen.

Acetaminophen or Tylenol® can be given for fever or soreness. ASA or Aspirin® should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

- Having your child drink lots of fluids. Fever dries out the body, so make sure your child drinks lots of fluids. Food is less important. If your child is hungry, then eating is fine; but if your child does not have an appetite, it is ok for them to miss a few meals.

Antibiotics cannot cure roseola. If your doctor prescribes them it means that the fever might be caused by a bacterial illness.

Your child can return to social activities, such as going to daycare or visiting the playground, as soon as the fever and the rash are gone. If your child is recovering from roseola and is returning to daycare, tell the caregivers about the recent illness.



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