



Hawaii State Department of Health

Disease Investigation Branch

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Roseola

(exanthem subitem, human herpesvirus 6)

What is roseola?

Roseola is a common, generally mild, viral illness of young children, especially those under the age of 4 years. The virus that causes roseola has recently been identified and named human herpesvirus 6.

How do you get it?

The mode of transmission is unknown. However, almost all children have been infected by 4 years of age.

What are the symptoms of roseola?

The symptoms include the sudden onset of fever, sometimes as high as 106°F, which lasts for 3 to 5 days. The fever is followed by a rash that lasts for 1 to 2 days. Although the symptoms are generally mild, occasionally, roseola can produce high fever seizures. The roseola rash appears as small, discrete (separated) rose-pink spots. In contrast, the rash in measles appears red, raised, and confluent (merged), and lasts for more than 3 days.

When do symptoms start?

The symptoms are thought to begin about 10 days following infection with the virus.

For how long is a person contagious?

The contagious period for roseola is unknown, but it is probably greatest during the febrile (fever) stage of the illness.

What is the treatment for roseola?

There is no specific treatment for roseola. Generally, only supportive care is suggested.

If you get it once can you get it again?

No. Once you get roseola you are immune to the disease.

Should a person with roseola be excluded from work or school?

Children with any rash with fever should not return to school until their rash is gone and they are well.

How do you keep from getting it?

The best way to prevent the spread of roseola is to avoid exposing others to an infected child during the febrile stage of the illness.