

**Consult your doctor to ensure that this information is right for your child. Information below is for general information and does not constitute medical advice.**

## **What is roseola?**

Roseola (roseola infantum) is a mild illness caused by a virus. It is generally harmless and is most common in children 6 months to 2 years of age. It is rare after age 4.

## **What causes roseola?**

Roseola is caused by two common viruses. The viruses belong to the family of herpes viruses, but they do not cause the cold sores or genital infections that herpes simplex viruses can cause.

The viruses that cause roseola are spread through tiny droplets of fluid from the nose and throat of infected people when they laugh, talk, sneeze, or cough. It is thought that the viruses are spread by someone who has not yet developed the symptoms of roseola. There is no known way to prevent the spread of roseola.

## **What are the symptoms of roseola?**

Roseola often starts with a sudden high fever [103° (39.4°) to 105° (40.6°)] that lasts 2 to 3 days, although it can last up to 8 days. The rapid increase in temperature may be the first sign of roseola and often occurs before you realize that your child has a fever. The fever ends suddenly.

After the fever ends, a rosy-pink rash may appear over your child's entire body, starting on the torso and spreading to the face, neck, and arms. The rash is not itchy and may last 1 to 2 days. The rash may appear without the fever.

On rare occasions, a sore throat, stomach ache, vomiting, and diarrhea occur.

A child with roseola may appear fussy or irritable and may have a decreased appetite, but most children behave almost normally.

## **How is roseola diagnosed?**

Roseola is diagnosed through a medical history and physical exam. Your health professional often will recognize roseola by the presence of fever and the appearance of a rash.

## **How is roseola treated?**

The roseola fever can be managed with acetaminophen (such as Tylenol or Panadol), ibuprofen (such as Advil or Motrin), or sponge baths. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20 years of age because of the risk of Reye's syndrome.

The roseola rash will go away without medical treatment.

## **Should I worry if my child has roseola?**

Roseola generally is a harmless viral infection. Like any illness that can cause a fever, it can cause fever seizures, which are uncontrolled muscle spasms and unresponsiveness that last 1 to 3 minutes. They are seldom serious. The fever seizure is caused by the rapid increase in temperature in a short period of time. Once a fever has reached a high temperature, the risk of a seizure is probably over. Fever seizures are not a form of epilepsy.

Contact your health professional if:

- \* Your child's rash worsens.
- \* Symptoms become so uncomfortable that your child cannot tolerate them.
- \* Other symptoms (such as a fever, a general feeling of illness, or signs of infection) are severe or become worse.
- \* A new rash continues longer than 1 week.
- \* A rash that has been previously diagnosed continues longer than 4 weeks or is not following the expected course.
- \* Your child's symptoms become more severe or more frequent.