Viral Rash / Viral Exanthems

Overview
Many viral infections can cause a rash in addition to other symptoms. Viral rashes are very common with viral infections in children and young adults because they are not immune yet to a variety of common viral infections.

Signs and Symptoms
A widespread rash of pink-to-red spots or bumps occurs primarily on the trunk, arms, and legs. Some of the various symptoms a person may have include:

- Itchy rash
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Aches and pain
- Feeling irritable
- Having a red or “strawberry” tongue
- Facial flushing
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Redness and/or soreness in the throat
- Runny nose
- Cough
- Congestion

Self-Care Guidelines
The treatment that is used will depend on what type of virus is causing the viral rash. Usually treatment is not necessary, as it will go away naturally in time, which is typically 10-14 days. If it is a severe case, it could take up to fourteen days to resolve. Some of the treatments may include:

- Getting plenty of rest.
- Drinking a lot of liquids to keep your body hydrated.
- Moisturizers for your skin to help with the dryness.
- Using oral antihistamines to help with itching.
  - Antihistamines (Loratadine / Claritin 10 mg daily, Cetirizine / Zyrtec 10 mg daily, Diphenhydramine / Benadryl 25-50 mg every 8 hours, or Chlorpheniramine Maleate / Chlor-Trimeton 4 mg every 4-6 hours).
- Take over-the-counter medications such as Acetaminophen / Tylenol or Ibuprofen / Motrin for pain and fever.
- Washing your skin gently using mild soap a couple of times a day.
- Taking lukewarm baths with added colloidal oatmeal (such as Aveeno) are useful for relief of itching.
- Wearing clothing that is loose so it does not irritate your skin.
Return for Follow-up if:

- Your fever increases to 103 F or higher.
- You get open wounds from scratching your skin, or you have a wound that is red, swollen, or painful.
- Your rash has turned into sores that drain blood or pus.
- Your rash lasts longer than 3 months.
- You have swelling or pain in your joints.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.