

FACT SHEET

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFM) is a virus from the enterovirus family called coxsackieviruses. It is a contagious disease that commonly infects children under ten years especially those ages 1-4 years. There are over 100 different enteroviruses. They exist as part of the normal environment on the inside of our digestive system. They are often found in childcare centers and preschools and places where children gather.

<http://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/index.html>

Symptoms: A slight fever, achy, flu-like symptoms; small blister-like sores erupting inside the mouth, sides of the tongue, inside the cheeks or gums, or on the palms of the hands, fingers, and soles of the feet; pink rash over certain areas of the body that may last 3-5 days; may only have sores in the back of the throat. Younger children who are unable to verbalize may have a decreased appetite or refuse to eat.

Spread: Enteroviruses are spread by oral-fecal route (the stool of an infected person is transmitted to another person when children place their hands, food or objects (toys) contaminated with stool, in the mouth). Or they can be spread through respiratory droplets from an infected person who coughs, sneezes and the droplets land on toys or other objects and others use these items then put their hands to their face, mouth or nose.

Incubation: After exposure, symptoms may occur in 3 to 5 days.

Contagious Period: While ill and possibly for several weeks afterward. Respiratory secretions may be shed for about two or three weeks and fecal shedding may last up to 11 weeks. Asymptomatic persons are able to spread infection.

Exclusion: Child should stay home until fever is gone and child is well enough to continue routine daily activities. It is unnecessary to exclude unless the child is feverish, is unable to participate, or affects staff's ability to care for others in the group.

Diagnosis and Treatment: There is no specific treatment for HFM, but encourage your child to drink fluids, offer popsicles and other cold treats. Children who are irritable from the fever, sores in the mouth, or achy muscle may be given acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help ease the pain. Blisters on hands and feet should be kept clean with gentle soap and water, patted dry and left uncovered. If blisters break open, a non-antibiotic

ointment and bandage can be applied. Never give a child with a fever aspirin.

Prevention:

Hand-washing with soap and running water vigorously for at least 20 seconds after using the bathroom, wiping the nose or mouth, and after handling diapers or anything soiled with stool.

Clean contaminated areas (diapering area, toilets, and potty-chairs) by washing surfaces with soap and water and then disinfect with a chlorine based solution of 1 part product to 20 parts water. Toys can be sprayed with this solution daily and when soiled. Wash hands after proper disposal of tissues, diapers and other soiled items.