

# Health Alert: Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is a mild, contagious viral infection common in young children. Symptoms include sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet. Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is most commonly caused by a coxsackievirus. The illness is usually not serious, but it is very contagious, spreading easily through person-to-person contact, respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through contact with contaminated surfaces and objects.

*For the latest information on Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/>*

*If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at [Schoolhealth@onenessfamily.org](mailto:Schoolhealth@onenessfamily.org).*

## **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) Symptoms**

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is common in infants and children younger than 5 years old. Most children have mild symptoms for 7 to 10 days.

If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, please keep them home and consult a doctor:

- Fever and flulike symptoms
- Mouth sores
- Skin rash, commonly found on the hands and feet and occasionally the buttocks. The rash is not itchy, but sometimes it has blisters. Depending on skin tone, the rash may appear red, white, gray, or only show as tiny bumps.
- Fussiness in infants and toddlers.
- Loss of appetite.

Children may return to campus as long as they are fever-free, have no uncontrolled drooling with mouth sores, and feel well enough to participate in classroom activities.

## **When is HFMD Contagious?**

People with hand, foot, and mouth disease are usually most contagious during the first week that they are sick. People can sometimes spread the virus to others for days or weeks after symptoms go away or if they have no symptoms at all.

## **How is HFMD Diagnosed and Treated?**

Healthcare providers can usually tell if someone has hand, foot, and mouth disease by examining the patient and the rash appearance while considering the patient's age and other symptoms.

Sometimes, healthcare providers might collect samples from the patient's throat or feces (poop) and send them to a laboratory to test for the virus. However, these tests are rarely done.

## **How can we limit the spread of HFMD?**

You can get infected with HFMD if you have the virus on your hands and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. To reduce your chance of getting sick, don't touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Help children wash their hands. Teach them how to wash their hands and make sure they wash them often.

Encourage all family members to wash their hands:

- After changing diapers
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick