



Jackson County Health Department

Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease



What is Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is an illness caused by a virus and occurs frequently in children under ten years of age, but adults can become infected also. Outbreaks are common in schools, day care centers and preschools. Most cases are seen in the summer and early fall.

How is Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease spread?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is spread by direct contact with nose and throat secretions, saliva, fluid from blisters, and contact with the stool of an infected person. The incubation period is 3-5 days. The disease is usually contagious during the first week of the illness. It may be longer since the virus can remain in the stool for several weeks. A person is most contagious during the first week of the illness.

How is Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease treated?

No specific treatment is available for enterovirus infections. Doctors may recommend medication to provide relief from fever, aches or pain from mouth ulcers.

How can Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease be prevented?

- Wash hands well with soap and water after toileting.
- Wash articles soiled with nose or throat discharges or feces with a 1:10 bleach solution.
- If secretions from blisters can be contained, no exclusion required.
- Avoid close contact (i.e., kissing, hugging, or sharing eating or drinking utensils) with someone infected with Hand, Foot and Mouth disease.

Symptoms of Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease:

- Begins with mild fever, tiredness, poor appetite, and frequently a sore throat.
- Small, blister-like sores develop on the inside of mouth, lasting up to 10 days.
- Similar sores resembling a rash (with flat or raised red spots, some with blisters) develop on the palms, fingers and soles of the feet.
- The person may only have mouth ulcers or rash, without any other symptoms.

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