

HAND-FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

What is it? Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease is a viral infection most commonly caused by coxsackievirus A16 or enterovirus 71.

What are the signs and symptoms? Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease is generally mild and some infected individuals may not have any symptoms at all. The illness usually starts with fever, malaise (overall feeling of being unwell), and sore throat. One or two days after the fever starts, these other signs may develop:

- Painful sores in the mouth or back of the throat.
- Skin rash on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet (may also appear on the knees, elbows, genital area, and buttocks). Rash is either flat or raised, and red, and sometimes has blisters.
- Vomiting and diarrhea.



How long does it take to show signs and symptoms? It takes 3-5 days after exposure to the virus for signs and symptoms to show. In some cases, an infected individual may not show signs and symptoms at all.

How is it spread? Hand, Foot, and Mouth disease is spread by close personal contact, through the air by coughing and sneezing, direct contact with stool (usually while changing diapers), or direct contact with contaminated surfaces and objects (such as toys).

How long does the infection last? The potential for an infected individual to spread the virus usually ends within one week. However, the virus can be released from the body through stool for several weeks.

Should my child see a doctor? Visiting a healthcare provider is recommended. While not routinely done, a healthcare provider may collect nose or throat fluids by swabbing those areas and sending the swab to a lab for testing.

Should my child stay home from school or daycare? While exclusion from school or daycare is not mandatory, it is recommended that children remain at home when they have fever, weeping rash, and/or change in behavior.

When should my child return to school or daycare? Once symptoms have resolved (usually within one week), children may return to school or daycare. Check with your child's daycare, preschool, or school for their policies.

What is the treatment for this disease? Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms with children's over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol or ibuprofen, for comfort to relieve pain and fever. **Caution: Aspirin or aspirin products should NOT be given to children!** Infected individuals should drink plenty of water.

What can I do to keep myself and others from being infected? **Handwashing is the most important method of preventing spread of this disease!** Teach everyone in your home to cover their nose and mouth when they sneeze or cough and to wash their hands often. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects thoroughly and often. Avoid close contact such as hugging, kissing, or sharing utensils and cups.