

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

FACT SHEET



Washtenaw County
Health Department

What is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is a highly contagious human disease caused by coxsackievirus or other enteroviruses. It usually occurs in the summer and early fall. It frequently affects young children in summer day camps and child care facilities. It is **not** the same as Foot-and-Mouth disease, which is primarily an animal disease.

What are the symptoms?

- Sudden onset of fever
- Sore throat
- Small white blisters appear in the mouth 1-2 days after onset of fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Rash with red spots and sometimes with blisters, on the palms of hands and soles of feet, as well as on the knees, elbows, buttocks, or genital area

How is it treated?

- There is no specific treatment for this disease.
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Treat fevers with non-aspirin products (acetaminophen, ibuprofen).
- Use mouthwashes or sprays to numb mouth pain.
- If you think that you or your child has symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease contact your healthcare provider.

How is it spread?

The disease is spread person-to-person through direct contact with the discharge from the infected person's nose, throat, feces, or fluid in blisters. Infected persons are the most contagious during the first week of illness, but can still pass the infection weeks after their symptoms have gone away.

How is it prevented?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease can be prevented by avoiding direct contact with the infected person, and by practicing good hygiene which includes:

- Covering your mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing and disposing of the tissue after each use.
- Washing hands thoroughly after contact with tissues, diapers, and bedding.
- Washing hands after using the bathroom and before preparing meals.
- Washing soiled objects with soap, or discard.
- Scrubbing bathroom floors and toilet seat with a solution of 1 tablespoon of bleach in one gallon of water, made daily.
- Don't share eating or drinking utensils.
- Avoiding close contact such as kissing and hugging.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.