

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



Department of Health & Human Services

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Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

What is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is a common viral illness caused by Enteroviruses. Small blister-like sores commonly appear in the mouth (usually on the inside of the cheek and tongue, sometimes on the gums, roof of the mouth, and lips). Similar sores resembling a rash may appear on the backs of the hands, palms, top of the feet and soles. A fever is sometimes present. The sores can last up to ten days.

How is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease spread?

Hand, Foot and Mouth disease is spread person to person by direct contact with nose and throat discharges (spread by droplets) and stool (feces) of infected persons.

How long is a person contagious?

A person is most contagious during the first week of illness.

Who can get Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?

Usually children under age ten, although adults can get it too. It occurs mostly in the summer and early fall. Outbreaks in schools, day-care centers, preschools, and nurseries are common.

Is there a treatment for Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for this virus.

How can Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease be prevented?

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, especially after changing diapers and using the bathroom.
- Clean dirty surfaces and soiled items like toys and countertops with soap and water, then disinfect with a solution of 2 teaspoons of household bleach to 4 cups of water.
- Wash soiled clothes promptly in hot soapy water and dry in clothes dryer.
- Seal disposable diapers in a plastic bag and put in a tightly closed garbage can.
- Exclude infected children from day-care or school until fever has disappeared, no new sores are appearing, and child is feeling well enough to participate in regular activities.

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OVER

HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS:

- use soap and running water
- rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- wash all surfaces, including:
 - backs of hands
 - wrists
 - between fingers
 - under fingernails
- rinse well
- dry hands with a paper towel
- turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands

For more information on Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

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