

Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease (HFMD)



What is hand, foot, and mouth disease?

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) is a common disease in infants and children 5 years and younger. It can spread easily and isn't usually serious. HFMD is most common in the summer and early fall. Even though they sound similar, hand, foot, and mouth disease is different than foot-and-mouth disease, which is found in cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs.

Who can get it?

HFMD is most common in children 5 years old and younger, but anyone can get it. If you are pregnant and think you have or have been exposed to HFMD, contact your healthcare provider.

Symptoms

- Fever (100.4°F or higher).
- Mouth sores and pain while swallowing.
- Skin rash that usually turns into fluid-filled blisters.
 - Blisters can appear anywhere, but are most often found on hands and feet.
- Most symptoms will go away in 7-10 days.
- Some people may not show any symptoms, but can still pass the disease to others.

If you think your child has HFMD, contact your healthcare provider. **If your child is dehydrated, has a severe headache, or a stiff neck, seek care immediately.**

How is HFMD spread?

- HFMD can be spread through blisters, drool, poop, coughs, sneezes, and runny noses.
- HFMD can spread when a person who has HFMD coughs or sneezes and another person breathes in the droplets.
- HFMD can also be spread when someone touches something that has the virus on it and then touches their mouth, eyes, or nose.
- Pets and wildlife cannot get or spread HFMD.
- A person can spread HFMD for weeks, even after symptoms go away.

How is HFMD treated?

There are no medications specifically for HFMD, but you can treat symptoms to make your child more comfortable. Talk with your healthcare provider about treatment options.

Mouth sores can be painful and children might not want to eat or drink. Make sure they get enough fluids.

How to help prevent HFMD from spreading

- Wash hands with soap and water often, especially after changing diapers, using the toilet, sneezing, coughing, or wiping noses.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean toys and other objects children put into their mouths with soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect all household surfaces.

Taking children with HFMD to childcare or school

Children who have been exposed to, or have been diagnosed with, HFMD can continue to attend childcare and school **unless**:

- They have mouth sores with drooling.
- They have a fever (100.4°F or higher) and other HFMD symptoms.
- They have oozing, fluid-filled blisters that can't stay covered with clothes or bandages.
- They are not well enough to participate in classroom activities.

Please follow your child care program's sickness policy.

Questions?

Call us at 360-728-2235