



August 2011

Community and Health Services Department



Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

(Coxsackievirus A16)

What is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?

Hand, foot and mouth disease is a human infection caused by an intestinal virus such as coxsackievirus A16. The infection does not usually cause severe illness. It may occur at any age, but it is most common in children under ten years of age. It is common in child care centres and usually occurs in the summer and fall. It is uncommon in adults, but those with weakened immune systems are at high risk.

Symptoms of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

This illness may cause fever, headache, vomiting, sore throat, loss of appetite, lack of energy, small painful ulcers in the mouth, and a skin rash. The ulcers may appear between one and two days after the onset of fever.

The skin rash may consist of red spots, often topped by small blisters. It usually appears on the hands and feet but may appear on other parts of the body. The rash is not itchy.

How Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease spreads

It is fairly contagious and is spread by direct contact with an infected person through:

- Blisters, nose and throat discharges.
- Stool (the person may show no symptoms).

Symptoms usually begin within three to five days after contact with the infection (incubation period).

NOTE: It is not related to the virus that causes diseases in animals.

If your child comes into contact with someone who has hand, foot and mouth disease, you should:

- Watch your child for symptoms of hand, foot and mouth disease.
- Contact your family doctor immediately if symptoms appear. The doctor will examine to see if the rash is due to hand, foot and mouth disease or some other type of severe infection.
- Make sure you wash your hands with soap and water after wiping your child's nose, changing a diaper, using the washroom, and before preparing or eating food.

Your child may continue attending the child care facility if feeling well enough to take part in all activities.

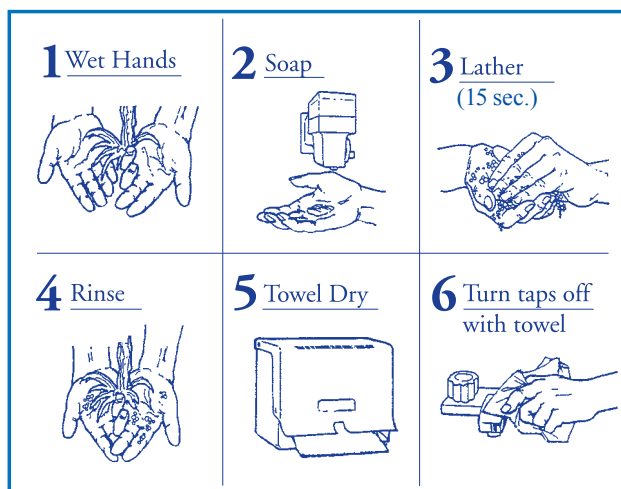
For further information, please call:
York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653
TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit www.york.ca

Preventing Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

There is no vaccine to prevent hand, foot and mouth disease. The most effective method of preventing hand, foot and mouth disease is frequent hand washing and to avoid sharing items such as cups, glasses and utensils with an infected person.

Treating Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

There is no treatment for the infection. Individual symptoms may be relieved with the use of medication.



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