



Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease Information Sheet

What is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?

Hand, foot and mouth disease is a communicable disease caused by a coxsackie virus. It may occur at any age, but it is most common in children under 10 years of age.

It is common in child care centres and usually occurs in the summer and early fall. It is not related to the virus that causes disease in animals.

Symptoms of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

The infection causes fever followed in 1 or 2 days by small painful blisters in the mouth, usually located inside of the cheeks and gums and on the sides of the tongue. This makes it difficult for the child to eat or drink. Blisters may also appear on the palms of a child's hands, on their fingers, on the soles of their feet and occasionally on their buttocks. Blisters are not itchy and may be present for 7 to 10 days.

Other signs and symptoms may include: headache, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, loss of appetite and lack of energy. The illness is usually mild.

It is possible to have the infection and **not** have any symptoms.

How Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease spreads

The period between contact with an infected person and the appearance of symptoms is usually 3 to 5 days.

The disease spreads through direct and indirect contact with nose and throat secretions and stool of an infected person by:

- Breathing in air contaminated with the virus after an infected person has coughed or sneezed
- Touching the nose and throat secretions of an infected person and then touching your own eyes, nose, or mouth
- Touching an infected child's stool (e.g., assisting with toileting, changing a diaper)
- Touching objects (e.g., toys, tables, taps, door handles) contaminated with the virus

 **1-800-361-5653**
TTY (for the hearing impaired) **1-866-252-9933**
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The disease spreads **very easily** in child care facilities and where children are close together.

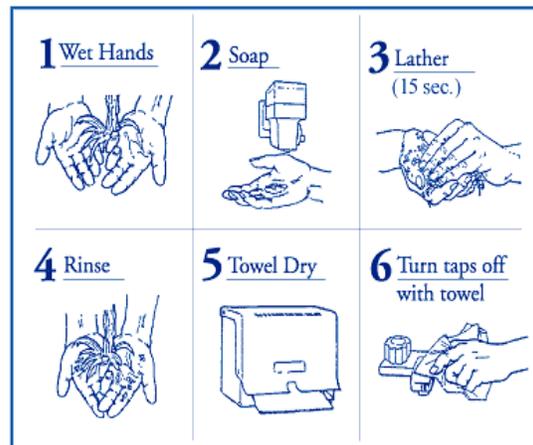
It is most contagious during the first week of the illness and perhaps longer since the virus can be present in the stool for several weeks.

Preventing Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

There is no vaccine to prevent hand, foot and mouth disease.

If your child comes in 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 for diagnosis and treatment options
- 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
- Carefully dispose of (or clean, if applicable) articles soiled by discharge from an infected child's nose and throat or stool
- Clean and disinfect all common toys and surfaces. Clean and disinfect diaper change area after each diaper change
- Avoid sharing items such as cups, glasses and utensils with an infected person



A child can attend child care if the child feels well enough to take part in activities, has no fever and staff are able to care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children in the group.

Treating Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

There is no specific treatment for this disease. Symptoms may be relieved with the use of medication.

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