

Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease (HFMD)

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

- ☐ **Because you or your child may have been exposed to hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD).**
 - ☐ **For informational purposes only.**
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General Information About Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD)

What is HFMD?

- It is caused by viruses that belong to the “enterovirus group”.
- It is a common illness among infants and children younger than 5 years of age.
- It can spread easily.
- It is usually not serious.
- It is most common in the summer and early fall.
- Although they sound similar, “hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)” is different than “foot-and-mouth disease” which is found in cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs.

Who can get it?

- Anyone can get HFMD, even if they’ve had it before.
- Most cases occur in children under 5 years old.
- If you are pregnant, contact your healthcare provider if you think you’ve been exposed to, or have, HFMD.

What are the symptoms?

- Fever (American Academy of Pediatrics defines fever as a temperature of 100.4°F [38° C] or higher)
- Mouth sores that can lead to pain with swallowing.
- Skin rash that begins as red spots and often develops into fluid filled blisters.
 - Blisters usually appear on the palms of the hands, fingers, and soles of the feet.
 - Blisters can appear on other parts of the body.
- Most symptoms go away in 7 to 10 days.
- Some people may show no symptoms at all, but they can still pass the virus to others.

How is it spread?

- The virus is found in:
 - Droplets from coughs, sneezes, and runny noses
 - Fluid from blisters or scabs
 - Fluid or drool from mouth sores
 - Stool (poop)
- The virus can spread when a person who has HFMD coughs or sneezes and another person breathes in the droplets.
- It can also spread by:

- touching an object or surface that has the virus on it and then touching the mouth, eyes, or nose.
 - sharing utensils or cups with someone who has HFMD.
 - Animals and pets cannot get or spread HFMD.
 - A person can spread HFMD for weeks, even after symptoms go away.
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What If My Child Develops HFMD Symptoms?

This fact sheet provides general information only; if you have additional questions or believe your child has HFMD, contact your healthcare provider.

How is HFMD diagnosed?

- A healthcare provider can typically diagnose HFMD based on a person's symptoms.
 - A healthcare provider can test for HFMD with a throat swab or stool (poop) sample. Because it can take 2 to 4 weeks to get the test results, this test is usually not done.
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What If My Child Has HFMD?

Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately if your child has HFMD.

How is it treated?

- There is not a specific medication for HFMD, but you can treat some of the symptoms to make your child more comfortable. Talk with your healthcare provider about treatment options.
- Infants 3 months or younger with a fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher should be seen by their healthcare provider.
- Since the mouth sores can be painful, children might not want to eat and drink. It is important that children get enough fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Talk with your child's healthcare provider if you have any concerns about your child's symptoms. **If your child is showing signs of dehydration (fewer wet diapers or less urine than usual, more tired than normal, dizziness, dry tongue or lips, fewer tears), or have a severe headache or stiff neck, they need to be seen by a healthcare provider immediately.**

How can I help prevent HFMD from spreading?

- The virus is easily removed with soap and water.
 - Wash hands often, especially after diaper changing, using the toilet, sneezing, coughing, or wiping noses.
 - Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Avoid sharing cups, eating utensils, food, and drinks with anyone who has HFMD.
 - Thoroughly clean toys and other objects children put into their mouths with soap and water.
 - Clean and disinfect household surfaces.
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Does My Child Need to Stay Home from Child Care?

Your child should not attend child care if one of the following applies:

- They have mouth sores with drooling.

- They have a fever (temperature of 100.4°F [38° C] or higher) along with other HFMD symptoms.
- They have oozing, fluid-filled blisters.
- They do not feel well enough to participate in classroom activities (for example: unusually tired; cranky or fussy; or crying more than normal).

Please follow your child care program's sickness policy.

References:

American Academy of Pediatrics

- *Caring for our Children, Chapter 3 Health Promotion and Protection, 3.6 Management of Illness, 3.6.1 Inclusion/Exclusion Due to Illness*
- *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 5th Edition. Pages 101-102*

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

- *Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD). <https://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/>*

Child Care Health Program – Public Health Seattle & King County

- *<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/child-teen-health/child-care-health/disease-prevention.aspx>. Disease Prevention Website*

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- *Foot and Mouth Disease website <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/fmd/index>*