



Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

Parent Resource Template

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DEFINITION

- Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a contagious illness usually caused by the Coxsackie virus. Despite its scary name, this illness is generally mild. The infection usually begins in the throat. It most commonly affects young children but can also occur in teenagers and adults.

SYMPTOMS

- Tiny blisters in the mouth and on the fingers, palms of hands, buttocks, and soles of feet. One, multiple, or all these areas may have blisters.
- Blisters may last a little more than a week.
- Common cold symptoms such as: fever, sore throat, runny nose, or cough.
- Blisters or sores in mouth may be painful and make it difficult to eat or drink.
- Headache
- Loss of appetite

PREVENTION

- Thorough and frequent handwashing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes to prevent spread of respiratory secretions.
- Sanitize contaminated surfaces.
- Contact with infected stool may spread the virus. Use thorough handwashing after toileting.

TREATMENT

- Rest, drink plenty of fluids, and use a non-aspirin fever reducing medication to ease discomfort.
- Popsicles, ice chips, ice cream, and cold drinks can feel soothing to the mouth.
- Soft foods will make eating easier. Salty, spicy or citrus foods will be painful if blisters are present in the mouth.
- Warm saltwater rinses in mouth, several times a day, for comfort (1/4 teaspoons of salt to 1/2 cup of warm water).

RETURN TO SCHOOL

- Children with this condition should stay home from school until their fever is gone (without use of fever-reducing medication), they are able to comfortably eat and drink, and they are feeling well enough to participate in school activities.

CALL YOUR HEALTH PROVIDER

- If your child is very uncomfortable.
- Inability to drink or eat.
- Child seems very ill and is unable to participate in their usual activities.

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Information compiled from the American Academy of Pediatrics