

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

What is Hand, Food, and Mouth Disease (HFMD)?

- HFMD is a viral disease that affects the hands, feet, and mouth.
- HFMD usually infects infants and children younger than 5 years old. However, it can sometimes occur in adults.

How does HFMD spread?

- Generally, a person with hand, foot, and mouth disease is most contagious during the first week of illness.
- People can sometimes be contagious shedding the virus for days or weeks (up to 11 weeks) after symptoms go away.
- Some people, especially adults, may not develop any symptoms, but they can still spread the virus to others.
- Person-to-person: Direct contact with saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus from the infected person's nose and throat or with fluid in blisters, or with stool.
- Surface-to-person: Touching objects and surfaces touched by infected persons.
- Infected persons are most contagious during the first week of the illness, but can still pass the virus for weeks after symptoms have gone away.

What are the symptoms?

- Fever, rash, sores, poor appetite, a vague feeling of illness, and sore throat.
- Painful sores in the mouth may blister and become ulcers.
- Skin rash, flat or raised red spots, develops over 1 to 2 days.
- Rash usually on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet and may appear on the knees, elbows, bottom, or genital area.
- Dehydration may occur because of painful mouth sores.

How do I stop the spread?

- Wash hands with soap and water carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before preparing foods or beverages.
- Disinfect surfaces and items, including toys. First wash the items with soap and water; then disinfect them with a solution of 1 tablespoon of bleach and 4 cups of water.
- Avoid close contact such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils or cups with infected people.

Where can I find more information?

- Go to cdc.gov and type Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease in SEARCH box.



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