

What is hand foot and mouth disease (HFMD)?

Hand-foot-and-mouth-disease (HFMD) is caused by multiple viruses that belong to the enterovirus genus (group). It commonly affects children less than 5 years of age, though can occasionally occur in adults. HFMD occurs most commonly during summer and fall.

What are the symptoms?

HFMD can cause fever, blister-like mouth sores, sore throat, loss of appetite, and a skin rash that may occur on the fingers and palms of the hands, on the buttocks, or on the soles of the feet. Dehydration may occur in young children if they are unable to swallow adequate liquids due to painful mouth sores.

How long does this disease last?

A person usually gets sick within three to six days after getting infected. The rash can last for about 7 to 10 days.

How is HFMD disease spread?

The viruses that cause HFMD are most commonly spread through close personal contact with an infected individual's saliva, drool, or nasal mucus; from the fluid from blister or scab; from feces; and from contaminated surfaces. It can also be transmitted through the air while an infected individual is coughing or sneezing.

Who is at risk for HFMD infection?

Infants and children less than 5 years of age are at highest risk for contracting HFMD, but older children and adults can be infected, especially when they live or work with infants.

What preventive measures and treatments are available?

To lower the risk of infection, maintain appropriate hand hygiene, especially after using the toilet and changing diapers. Teach children to cover their mouths with tissue when sneezing or coughing. Clean and disinfect soiled items such as toys, and surfaces. Avoid close contact or sharing cups and utensils with those infected with hand, foot, and mouth disease. HFMD is not a vaccine preventable disease.

Treatment for HFMD is mostly supportive care, and should involve increased fluid intake to prevent dehydration and the use of over-the-counter medication, such as acetaminophen, to reduce fever and pain associated with mouth sores.



What should schools do?

- Notify exposed families about HFMD and advise monitoring for symptoms,
- Encourage parents to seek medical advice if a child is unwilling to eat or drink due to mouth sores

What are recommendations for exclusion?

No exclusion is necessary unless infected individuals come to school with a fever. Schools and childcare programs should consider whether affected individuals require additional care that exceeds the staffing abilities of the facility.

Because HFMD can initially present with nonspecific symptoms such as fever and sore throat, it is important that the infected individual visits their healthcare provider to be screened for other diseases such as COVID-19 and influenza.

For more information, visit [Symptoms and Diagnosis of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease | CDC](#) or [Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease - Symptoms and Causes | Mayo Clinic](#).



© MAYO FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



© MAYO FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

