

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD)

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

HFMD is a highly contagious, but usually not serious, virus that causes blisters or a skin rash commonly found on the hands and feet. It is common in children younger than 5 years old, however, anybody can get it.

What are the signs and symptoms of HFMD?

Children often get a fever and other flu-like symptoms 3-5 days after catching the virus. They may experience general malaise, eating or drinking less, or a sore throat. They may also get painful mouth sores than can blister. The skin rash associated with HFMD typically presents on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, but can also show up on arms, legs, and buttocks. The rash is usually not itchy.

How is HFMD transmitted?

HFMD spreads easily through person-to-person contact, but can also be spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread by contact with contaminated surfaces or by contact with an infectious persons' feces, such as during a diaper change.

How is HFMD treated?

HFMD can be treated with over-the-counter medications, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, to relieve fever and pain. Infected persons should be sure to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Seek medical attention if your child is not drinking enough to stay hydrated, if symptoms do not improve after 10 days, or if your child is younger than 6 months old or immunocompromised. There is no vaccine available to protect against the viruses that cause HFMD.

How can we prevent HFMD?

Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best way to prevent infection. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Help children wash their hands and teach them how to wash their hands properly. Clean and disinfect commonly touched toys and surfaces often. Lastly, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to lessen your chances of getting sick.



For more information, visit www.CDC.gov/hand-foot-mouth



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