

Sometimes small outbreaks occur in nurseries and schools. It is mainly infectious until the spots and mouth ulcers have gone, therefore children should be kept off school until the symptoms ease, all blisters have dried and they are feeling better, there is no need to wait for the last blister to disappear to go back to school or nursery, providing the child is well.

Children can be mildly infectious for several weeks as the virus may be passed out with the faeces (stools) for several weeks after the symptoms have gone. Therefore, it is sensible to maintain good hygiene to reduce the chance of passing on the virus. For example:

- Hand washing after using the toilet
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- Wipe the nose and mouth with disposable tissues
- Adults should take particular care when handling nappies, tissues and wash hands after.
- Soiled cloths, bedding and towels should be washed on a hot cycle of the washing machine

- It is best not to share cups, eating utensils towels etc. whilst ill with this infection and for several weeks afterwards.
- Do not deliberately pierce blisters, as the fluid is infectious, it will cause pain and it could cause further infect.

How can I contact a member of the Infection Prevention & Control Team?

Tell the Clinical Nurse Manager, doctor or nurse looking after you if you would like to speak to a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team and they will contact us.

Additional information can be found at :
<http://intranet.tuh.ie/departments/IPC/Pages/home.aspx>

We have made every possible effort to make sure that all the information provided in this leaflet is true, accurate, complete and up to date at the time of publication.

Version 9

Reference: **Patient.co.uk** and the **HPSE**
(Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

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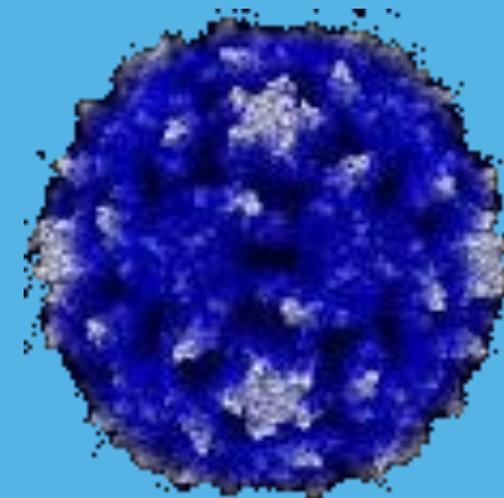
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PATIENT
INFORMATION
LEAFLET

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease



What is hand, foot and mouth disease?



Hand foot and mouth disease (HFMD) is an infectious disease caused by a viral infection. It can occur at any age, although it is more common in young children. Most children fully recover within a week. Serious complications occur rarely. This disease is not related to the disease with a similar name which affects animals.

What are the symptoms of hand, foot and mouth disease?

(HFMD) most commonly affects children under ten years of age. Older children and adults are sometimes affected and tend to develop a milder form of the illness compared with younger children. The illness often starts with a feeling of being unwell for a day or so. This may include a high temperature (fever). After this a sore throat commonly occurs, quickly followed by small spots that develop inside the mouth, palms of hands and soles of feet. These soon develop into small mouth ulcers.

In about 25% of cases; a day or so after the mouth ulcers occur spots can also develop on the skin.

The spots are small lumps and usually appear on the hands and feet. Spots sometimes also appear on the buttocks, legs and genitals. The spots rarely develop on other parts of the body. The spots are similar to chickenpox, but are smaller. Unlike chickenpox, they are not usually itchy but can be quite tender.

Is hand, foot and mouth disease serious?

Usually not. The Condition usually lasts 7-10 days and resolves spontaneously. The mouth ulcers can be painful and can last up to a week. The sore mouth may make a child miserable for a few days.

What is the treatment for hand, foot and mouth disease?

There is no treatment that will take away the virus. The aim is to ease the symptoms and make your child as comfortable as possible until the illness goes away (which it normally does within a week or so).

How to make your child comfortable

- You can give paracetamol or Ibuprofen, always read the label.
- Dress the child in loose clothing. The aim is to prevent overheating or shivering.
- Give lots of drinks; This helps to prevent dehydration. Cool sloppy foods such as yogurts may help if the mouth is sore. Ice lollies may also help and are a way of giving fluids.

Is hand, foot and mouth disease infectious?

Yes. The incubation period is three to six days. This means it takes three to six days to develop symptoms after being infected from another person. Most cases are passed on from coughing and sneezing which transmits the virus into the air. If a patient has *Hand Foot and Mouth* we may share that information with other hospitals. The Patient should also inform their carers of the result on admission to another hospital.