

Facts about Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

Hand, foot and mouth disease is caused by a virus. Anyone can get hand, foot and mouth disease but it is most common in children. It usually occurs in the summer and fall. Hand, foot and mouth disease is not usually serious but children may have the following signs:

- fever
- headache
- sore throat
- not interested in eating or playing
- small, painful sores in the mouth
- a skin rash

The rash looks like red spots with a small blister on top. The rash is usually on the hands and feet but can show up on other parts of the body.

Hand, foot and mouth disease is not the same as foot and mouth disease that affects animals.

There is no blood test for hand, foot and mouth disease and no medicine to treat it. It may be possible to get the disease more than once. There is no vaccine. There are no special tests or treatments for pregnant women in contact with someone with hand, foot and mouth disease.

Washing hands, especially after changing diapers or helping children go to the toilet, can help control the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease.

Clean and sanitize all common toys and surfaces.

How is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease Spread?

Hand, foot and mouth disease can be spread in droplets coughed, sneezed or breathed into the air by someone with the disease or by contact with the feces of someone with the disease. It can also be spread by touching objects, such as toys or tables that have the virus on them, and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

What to Do at Home

- If another child has hand, foot and mouth disease, watch your child for signs of the disease.
- Wash your hands and your child's hands carefully after you wipe your child's nose, change a diaper or use the toilet.
- Wash your hands often and always before and after preparing food.

When to Call Your Doctor or 811

Call your doctor immediately if your child has any of the following signs:

- a temperature of 38.5 °C and is less than 6 months of age
- has a headache or sore throat
- is listless, not interested in playing with toys or is unusually sleepy
- has any other signs of illness that concern you



Children with hand, foot and mouth disease may go to the child care centre or school if they feel well enough to take part in activities.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol™, Tempra™) or ibuprofen (Advil™, Motrin™) may help reduce a fever and provide some comfort. Always follow the directions on the package about how much and how often to take acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Never give products containing ASA (acetylsalicylic acid, such as Aspirin™) to anyone under the age of 20 years. Use of ASA products by children can lead to Reye's syndrome, a serious condition affecting the brain and liver.