

## HAND-FOOT-MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD)

Hand-foot-mouth disease is a common childhood illness featuring mouth sores, fever, and a rash. HFMD is usually caused by a virus called coxsackievirus A16. This disease is most common among young children, usually under age 10. Once someone has this virus they are generally immune to it, but they may get another form caused by an Enterovirus family.

Symptoms usually start 3-7 days after being exposed to the virus. Symptoms include: fever, loss of appetite, sore throat, sores in the mouth and blisters may form. A skin rash may develop over a day or two on the palms and soles. It is also common to have the rash on the buttocks. Unlike chickenpox, the rash does not itch. The rash disappears and the child usually feels better within a week.

Treatment is pain relief and plenty of fluids. Antibiotics do not help. Sometimes a diagnosis of ear infection is made because the eardrum is usually red.

This virus is spread by droplet transmission, contact transmission and fecal-oral transmission. The best means of prevention is good handwashing and washing surfaces like countertops and bathroom facilities with a disinfectant. The CDC has no recommendation for exclusion from school or day care because they feel that the children had already been exposed and probably does not prevent others from becoming infected. If your child has a fever we do recommend that they stay home. The first few days, they probably won't feel like being in school anyway.