



04-10-2017

NOTICE OF HANDS, FOOT, MOUTH DISEASE

Dear Parents,

Just a note to inform you we have had a confirmed case of hand, foot, mouth disease (HFMD) in the lower grades.

What is hand-foot-and-mouth disease?

Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is an illness that causes sores in or on the mouth and on the hands, feet, and sometimes the buttocks and legs. The sores may be painful. The illness usually doesn't last more than a week or so.

Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is common in children but can also occur in adults. It can occur at any time of year but is most common in the summer and fall.

It is not the same as other diseases that have similar names: foot-and-mouth disease (sometimes called hoof-and-mouth disease) or mad cow disease. These diseases almost always occur in animals.

What causes hand-foot-and-mouth disease?

Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is caused by a virus called an enterovirus.

The virus spreads easily through coughing and sneezing. It can also spread through infected stool, such as when you change a diaper or when a young child gets stool on his or her hands and then touches objects that other children put in their mouths. Often the disease breaks out within a community.

It usually takes 3 to 6 days for a person to get symptoms of hand-foot-and-mouth disease after being exposed to the virus. This is called the incubation period.

What are the symptoms?

At first your child may feel tired, get a sore throat, or have a fever of around 101°F (38°C) to 103°F (39°C). Then in a day or two, sores or blisters may appear in or on the mouth and on the hands, feet, and sometimes the buttocks. In some cases a skin rash may appear before the blisters do. The blisters may break open and crust over.

The sores and blisters usually go away in a week or so.

In some cases there are no symptoms, or they are very mild. Parents may get the disease from their children and not even realize it.

How is hand-foot-and-mouth disease diagnosed?

A doctor can tell if your child has hand-foot-and-mouth disease by the symptoms you describe and by looking at the sores and blisters. Tests usually aren't needed.

How is it treated?

Hand-foot-and-mouth disease usually doesn't need treatment. You can use home care to help relieve your child's symptoms.

- Offer your child plenty of cool fluids to help with sore throat. Cold foods such as flavored ice pops and ice cream also may help.
- Don't give your child acidic or spicy foods and drinks, such as salsa or orange juice. These foods can make mouth sores more painful.
- For pain and fever, give your child acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (such as Advil). Do not give your child aspirin. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness. Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.

Children are most likely to spread the disease during the first week of the illness. But the virus can stay in the stool for several months and may spread to others. To help prevent the disease from spreading:

- If your child goes to day care or school, talk to the staff about when your child can return.
- Wash your hands frequently. It is especially important to wash your hands after you touch a blister or change the diaper of an infected child.
- Teach all family members to wash their hands often. It is especially important to wash your hands after you change the diaper of an infected child.
- Don't let your child share toys or give kisses while he or she is infected.

If your child is showing signs of the illness- especially fever, you should not send your child to school until symptoms subside, check with your child's doctor. You should never send a child to school that has a fever. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 361-256-3031.

Thank you,

Vanessa N. Carrillo, BISS Nurse, MA