

HAND FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE FACT SHEET

TO: Parent/Guardian

FROM: NDES Nurse

There has been a report of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease in your child's grade. Please read the info below. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school clinic at 440-279-1127, ext. 1130.

WHAT IS HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE?

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a common childhood virus that pediatricians, childcare centers and preschools see in summer and early fall. Despite its scary name, hand, foot, and mouth disease is a common, contagious illness caused by different viruses. It typically affects infants and children under age 5, but older kids and adults can catch it as well.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

From the time the child is exposed to hand, foot, and mouth disease, it takes 3 to 6 days for the first symptoms to show up. This is called the incubation period. It usually starts with a fever, sore throat, and runny nose—much like the common cold—but then a rash with tiny blisters may start to show up on the following body sites: in the mouth, on the inner cheeks, gums, sides of the tongue, top of the mouth, fingers, palms of hands, soles of feet, and buttocks. **Note:** One, few, or all of these body sites may have blisters.

Symptoms are the worst in the first few days but are usually completely gone within a week. Peeling of the fingers and toes after 1 to 2 weeks can happen, but it is harmless.

HOW IS HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE DIAGNOSED?

Your pediatrician can tell if your child has hand, foot, and mouth disease based on the symptoms you describe and by looking at your child's mouth sores and rash. Depending on how severe your child's symptoms are, your pediatrician may collect samples from your child's throat send them to a lab for testing.

If your child is diagnosed with hand, foot, and mouth disease, make sure to inform your child's child care provider or school. They may need to inform other parents and staff members about watching for symptoms.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

There isn't any medicine to treat or cure hand, foot, and mouth disease. The only thing parents can do is ease the fever and pain with acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Call your pediatrician if your child's fever lasts more than 3 days or if he or she is not drinking fluids.

HOW LONG IS IT CONTAGIOUS?

You are generally most contagious during the first week of illness. But children with hand, foot, and mouth disease may shed the virus from the respiratory tract (nose, mouth and lungs) for 1-3 weeks and in the stool for weeks to months after the infection starts