



Central Michigan District Health Department
“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”

For more information, call your local CMDHD branch office:

Arenac (989) 846-6541/Clare (989) 539-6731/Gladwin (989) 426-9431/
Isabella (989) 773-5921/Osceola (231) 832-5532/Roscommon (989) 366-9166

www.cmdhd.org

HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

What is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?

This is an illness caused by a virus called Coxsackievirus A 16. Infants and children under 10 are at greatest risk for getting this illness, but adult cases are not unusual. The illness occurs most frequently in the summer and early autumn and can be in epidemic proportion in summer camps and child day care facilities.

What are the symptoms?

- Sudden onset of fever
- Sore throat
- Tonsil area fiery red
- Oyster shell white little blisters appear in the mouth 4-6 days after the onset of the illness
- Loss of appetite
- Sometimes nausea and vomiting
- Sores appear on palms, fingers and soles of feet
- Sometimes no specific symptoms

How long does it last?

The incubation period is 3-5 days and the illness usually lasts for 7-10 days. The person with Hand, Food and Mouth Disease is **very contagious** during the acute stage of the illness and perhaps longer since viruses stay in the person's bowel movements for several weeks.

What is the treatment?

There is no quarantine or immunizations for Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease. There is no specific treatment other than treating the symptoms. The ill person should rest, take food and fluids as they are able (avoid citrus juices). A non-aspirin product may be taken for pain or fever. Normal activities can be resumed when the person feels better as the virus is no longer active from the mouth and nose.

How is this disease spread?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackievirus A 16) is spread by **direct contact** with nose and throat discharges (coughing, sneezing) and with the bowel movements of the infected person.

How can I protect my children and myself from this disease?

Direct contact with infected persons should be avoided. Don't share eating or drinking utensils. If you must care for a person with Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease, be sure to wash your hands after giving care or touching soiled clothing or bedding. Soiled articles should be washed with soap or discarded.

Always use good hygiene. Wash your hands after using the bathroom and before preparing or eating food. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw away tissues immediately after use. Teach your children these good hygiene practices which will protect them against many diseases as well as Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease.