

What about staying away from work/ school/preschool?

Anyone who has the infection should be kept away from other children. It is best if you keep the child home from school/pre-school especially while they feel unwell.

Do you require further information?

For further information contact:

- Your local doctor or practice nurse
- Your local Public Health Nurse
- Communicable Diseases at Community and Public Health



Other resources available on childhood infections:

- Rotavirus
- Impetigo
- Whooping cough
- Ringworm
- Slapped cheek disease
- Conjunctivitis
- Threadworms

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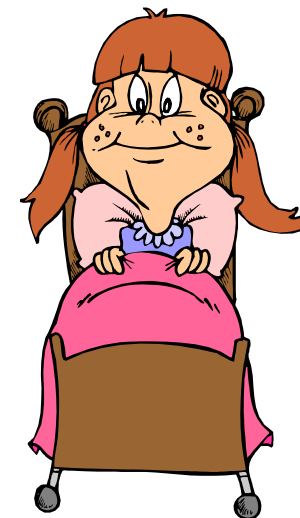
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Communicable Diseases
Community and Public Health
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Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease



Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

What is Hand Foot and Mouth Disease?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is a common, usually mild illness caused by a virus. It is NOT the same as Foot and Mouth Disease which occurs in farm animals.

What are the symptoms?

The illness has a sudden onset with:

- Fever (often the first symptom)
- Poor appetite
- Sore throat
- Generally feeling unwell

Fever begins 1-2 days before sores develop in the mouth beginning as small red spots that blister and may form ulcers. These are usually located on the tongue, gums and inside of the cheeks.

The skin rash will develop over 1-2 days with flat or raised red spots, some with blisters and can be found on the palms of hands and soles of feet. They may also appear on the buttocks and are not usually itchy.

Symptoms usually appear 3-5 days after exposure to the virus and last for 7-10 days.

Who is at risk of getting it?

This disease is found worldwide and can occur in epidemics.

It is more common in summer and early autumn and outbreaks are frequent in crèches and child care centres.

It is generally an illness of children under 10 years of age but adults are occasionally affected.

How is it caught?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is transmitted by direct contact with fluid from the nose and throat, or from the faeces of infected people.

Transmission to others occurs especially during the early stages of the illness but the virus is shed in faeces for several weeks and this may be a source of spread.

A person is most infectious during the first week of illness.

How is it treated?

No active treatment is required as sores will heal on their own.

Medication can be given to relieve symptoms such as fever and pain.

How is spread prevented?

Special care should be taken in washing hands after:

- Using the toilet
- Changing nappies
- Handling objects contaminated with saliva or nasal discharge

In addition:

- Young children with symptoms should not be allowed to share toys
- It is best not to share towels or face cloths
- Disinfect contaminated surfaces with a bleach based household cleaning agent
- Wash soiled articles of clothing

