

# Fact Sheet: Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

## What is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is a highly contagious disease caused by the Coxsackie virus. It usually occurs in the summer and early fall. It frequently affects young children in summer day camps and day care facilities.

## What are the symptoms?

- sudden onset of fever
- sore throat
- small white blisters appear in the mouth 4-6 days after onset of the illness
- loss of appetite
- nausea and vomiting
- sores on the palms and soles of the feet

Symptoms appear 3-5 days after exposure and the illness usually lasts 7-10 days. This disease is highly contagious during the early stages of the illness and the virus can stay in the bowel movements for several weeks after the person no longer has symptoms.

## How is it spread?

The disease is spread through direct contact with the discharge from the infected person's nose or throat, or with feces.

## How is it treated?

Sometimes there are no clear symptoms. If you think you or your children have been infected, contact your doctor for treatment recommendations.

In general:

- There is no specific treatment for this disease because it is caused by a virus.
- Treat fevers with non-aspirin products (acetaminophen, ibuprofen) and make sure the person drinks enough water to stay well hydrated.

## How is it prevented?

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is easily prevented by avoiding direct contact with the infected person, and good hygiene practices which include:

- Cover your mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing and dispose of the tissue after each use.
- Wash hands thoroughly after contact with tissues, diapers, and bedding.
- Wash hands after using the bathroom and before preparing meals.
- Wash soiled objects with soap, or discard.
- Scrub bathroom floors and toilet seat with a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water, made daily.
- Don't share eating or drinking utensils.

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.*

