

# Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackievirus)



**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.

## **What causes hand-foot-and-mouth disease?**

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

**Signs and symptoms:** fever, headache, muscle aches, sometimes a sore throat, stomach ache or feel sick to their stomach (nausea). Half of the children with this disease can have no symptoms. Sometimes kids can feel “hot” but have no other symptoms. The fever usually last about 3 days then disappears.

**What part of the body does this virus usually affect?** It usually causes painful red blisters in the throat, on the tongue, gums, roof of the mouth, inside the cheeks and on the palms of the hands and on the feet.

**How is Hand-foot-and-mouth disease spread from one person to another?** It can be spread by poor hand washing and from droplets sprayed in the air when someone coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread in the stool (bowel movements) if someone does not wash their hands after changing a diaper or after going to the bathroom. People who are infected are the most contagious the first week they are sick.

**Prevention:** **Hand washing is the best prevention practice!** Remind everyone in the family to wash their hands often especially after using the bathroom and before meals. Kids who are sick with this should stay home from school 3-4 days.

Take your child to the Doctor if they have: fever higher than 100.4 for infants younger than 6 months and if older a fever higher than 102, poor appetite, vomiting, trouble feeding, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, neck stiffness, severe headache, and unusual sleepiness. Offer them plenty to drink to avoid dehydration, and let them have plenty of rest.

**It is always best to be safe, take them to the clinic as needed!**