

HAND, FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE FAQS

What is and what causes hand-foot-and-mouth disease?

- Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is caused by a virus
- The illness usually doesn't last more than a week
- Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is common in children but can also occur in adults
- Occurs most commonly in the summer and fall

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



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



How is the 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

How can I prevent hand-foot-and-mouth disease?

- 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 plenty to drink to avoid dehydration and plenty of rest



For more information, call your Primary Care Provider at (520) 562-3321