

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

Hand, foot and mouth disease is a viral infection that most often occurs in young children, but it can occur at any age. It is caused by the Coxsackie virus.

What are the symptoms of a respiratory infection?

It may cause fever, headache, a sore throat and mouth, loss of appetite, lack of energy and a characteristic rash. The rash is red spots, often with small blisters on top, and appear on the hands and feet (sometimes on other parts of the body as well). Small painful ulcers may also appear in the mouth.

How is hand, foot and mouth disease spread?

The disease spreads from person to person through direct or indirect contact with an infected person's saliva or stool.

How long is hand, foot and mouth disease contagious?

It is contagious during the early stages of the illness; however, children may remain infectious for 1 to 2 weeks and the virus may remain in the stool for 4 weeks after onset of the illness.

How is hand, foot and mouth disease treated?

Usually, treatment is not needed. Since hand, foot and mouth is caused by a virus, antibiotics do not treat it.

More to know

- This illness usually lasts for 7 to 10 days.
- Outbreaks are most likely to occur in the summer and fall.
- Children may continue to attend school and daycare if they are feeling well enough to take part in activities and no longer have a fever.
- During diaper-changing routines, it is important that everyone (parent and child) uses proper hand washing techniques.



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