



Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease

What is it?

Hand, foot and mouth disease is an infection caused by the Coxsackie virus. Though it mostly affects young children it can occur at any age.

How is it spread?

Hand, foot and mouth disease spreads from one person to another by contact with saliva, mucus or the stool of an infected person. It may take up to 6 days after getting the virus before symptoms start to show. The virus can persist in stool for several weeks even after symptoms have gone away.

What do I look for?

Symptoms may include fever, poor appetite, lack of energy, headache, and sore throat often followed by painful sores in the mouth. A rash with blisters may also develop on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, or on the buttocks. This illness usually lasts for 7–10 days.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for hand, foot and mouth disease. Over the counter medications can help with fever and pain and drinking fluids is important to prevent dehydration. Children may return to school or childcare settings once they feel well enough to participate in activities.

How can I protect myself?

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizers when hands are not visibly dirty.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow and encourage others to do the same.
- Wash articles soiled with nose and throat discharges, including toys, in soapy water.
- Wash your hands after handling soiled articles and diapers.
- Do not share water bottles, straws, eating utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, toys or anything else that has been in contact with saliva, nose or throat secretions.
- If you are ill, stay at home and isolate yourself from others.

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905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | durham.ca/health

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

