



CALHOUN COUNTY

Public Health Department

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Fact Sheet

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

What is hand, foot, and mouth disease?

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) is a common viral illness among infants and children usually caused by the Coxsackie and enteroviruses. It usually occurs in the summer and early fall but can be spread any time of the year.

Who gets hand, foot, and mouth disease?

Infants and children under 5 years of age are at the greatest risk for the illness, but adult cases are not unusual. It frequently affects schools, daycare facilities, and summer camps.

How is hand, foot, and mouth disease spread?

The illness is very contagious. HFMD is spread through direct contact with the infected person's nose and throat secretions, blister fluid, or saliva. It can also be passed through contact with contaminated surfaces or objects; droplets when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or talks; and feces.

Infected persons are most contagious during the first week of illness. The viruses that cause HFMD can remain in the body for weeks after a patient's symptoms have gone away. This means that the infected person can still pass the infection to other people even though he/she appears well. Also, some persons who are infected and excreting the virus, including most adults, may have no symptoms.

What are the symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease?

Symptoms usually appear three to five days after exposure and the illness usually lasts seven to ten days.

Common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Eating or drinking less
- Sore throat
- Feeling unwell
- Skin rash and/or mouth sores

What is the treatment for hand, foot, and mouth disease?

There is no specific treatment for HFMD since it is caused by a virus. The majority of people get better on their own in 7 to 10 days. Persons with the disease should rest and may be given medication and liquids to control fever and pain associated with the disease. Aspirin should not be given to children.

Are there complications from hand, foot, and mouth disease?

HFMD is usually a mild disease and nearly all patients recover without medical treatment. Rarely, viral, or “aseptic,” meningitis can occur with HFMD.

How can hand, foot, and mouth disease be prevented?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against the virus that causes HFMD.

The following steps can help to prevent catching or spreading the virus:

- Wash hands frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touches surfaces and shared items
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid close contact with sick people

How do I get more information on hand, foot, and mouth disease?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

 www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)

Website: www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/index.html

Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/index-sp.html>

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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.