



## COMPASSION SERVICES

### Hand Foot and Mouth Disease

Despite its scary name, hand, foot, and mouth disease is a common, contagious illness caused by different viruses. It typically affects infants and children under age 5, but older kids and adults can catch it as well.

#### **What are the signs and symptoms?**

From the time the child is exposed to hand, foot, and mouth disease, it takes 3 to 6 days for the first symptoms to show up. This is called the incubation period. It usually starts with a fever, sore throat, and runny nose—much like the common cold—but then a rash with tiny blisters may start to show up on the following body sites:

- In the mouth
- Fingers
- Palms of hands
- Soles of feet
- Buttocks

Note: One, few, or all of these body sites may have blisters.

Symptoms are the worst in the first few days but are usually completely gone within a week. Peeling of the fingers and toes after 1 to 2 weeks can happen, but it is harmless.

#### **What is the treatment?**

There isn't any medicine to treat or cure hand, foot, and mouth disease. The only thing parents can do is ease the fever and pain with acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Call your pediatrician if your child's fever lasts more than 3 days or if he or she is not drinking fluids.

#### **How long is it contagious?**

You are generally most contagious during the first week of illness. But, children with hand, foot, and mouth disease may shed the virus from the respiratory tract (nose, mouth and lungs) for 1-3 weeks and in the stool for weeks to months after the infection starts.

#### **How can I help prevent and control the spread of hand, foot, and mouth disease?**

Teach your children to cover their mouths and noses when sneezing or coughing with a disposable tissue, if possible, or with an arm sleeve if no tissue is available. Teach everyone to wash their hands right after using tissues or having contact with mucus. Change or cover contaminated clothing.

Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/infections/Pages/Hand-Foot-and-Mouth-Disease.aspx>