

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

What is hand, foot, and mouth disease?

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a highly contagious viral infection that can cause sores in the mouth, on the hands, feet, and buttocks, and sometimes on other areas of the body including the face and genitalia. It is possible to get sores in only some of these areas.

These sores can look like small red bumps or blisters and can be painful or itchy. The illness can last for 7-10 days.

How does hand, foot, and mouth disease spread?

People with hand, foot, and mouth disease are most likely to spread the disease during the first week of their illness, but the virus can live in their body for weeks after the symptoms have resolved. The virus is spread through:

- ◆ Saliva and nasal secretions
- ◆ Fluid from sores with blisters
- ◆ Stool

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

The infection resolves on its own. Treatment is focused on relieving symptoms such as fever, pain, and itching.

How can I prevent the spread of hand, foot, and mouth disease?

- ◆ **Practice good hand hygiene!** – wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- ◆ **Disinfect frequently touched surfaces** – infected surfaces such as door knobs and counters can spread the virus to you.
- ◆ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose** – this can spread the virus from an infected surface to you.
- ◆ **Have good respiratory etiquette** – cough and sneeze into tissues, your arm or elbow, not into your hands.
- ◆ **Stay healthy** – get plenty of sleep; exercise appropriately; manage your stress; eat nutritious foods; and drink plenty of liquids.
- ◆ **Avoid high risk contact with others if you are ill** – If you are a food handler, work with children or are enrolled in a clinical rotation, do not return until you are symptom free.



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