

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease Fact Sheet

- Hand, Foot, and mouth disease is caused by a virus
 - Hand, foot, and mouth disease, usually affects the inside of the mouth and the palms of the hands, fingers, and soles of the feet. It is commonly caused by enterovirus like coxsackievirus, enterovirus 71 etc.
- Anyone can get hand, foot, and mouth disease
 - Young children are primarily affected, but it may be seen in adults. Most cases occur in the summer and autumn. Outbreaks may occur among groups of children especially in day care centers or nursery schools. The incubation is usually 3-5 days.
- Hand, foot, and mouth disease is usually spread through person to person contact
 - The virus is spread primarily from the feces of infected persons to the mouth of the next person. It is spread also by the respiratory tract from mouth or respiratory secretions, by person to person contact, and from saliva on hands or toys.
- The Symptoms are much like a common cold with a rash
 - The rash appears as ulcers in the mouth, on the inner cheeks, gums, sides of the tongue, and as bumps or blisters on the hand, feet, and sometimes other parts of the skin. The skin rash may last for 7-10 days.
- Hand, foot, and mouth disease can be shed for several weeks
 - People can spread the disease when they are shedding the virus. The primary means of transmission is from the feces. The virus can be shed for several weeks after the onset of infection. The virus is also shed from the mouth and throat when a person has cold-like symptoms. Greatest Communicability is during the acute phase/stage of illness when people are feeling ill.
- There is no specific treatment for the virus that causes hand, foot, and mouth disease
- Help prevent and control the spread of hand, foot, and mouth disease by
 - Washing hands well, especially after going to the bathroom, changing diapers and handling diapers or other stool soiled material
 - Covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing

- Washing toys and other surfaces that have saliva on them
- Children should be excluded from child care or school settings if there is a fever and/or ulcers in the mouth, that is, when the child may be feeling ill
- If blisters/lesions are open and weeping, children should be excluded from child care settings until the blisters are dried and crusted