Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) Fact Sheet

West Virginia Department of HEALTH
BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) is a disease caused by viruses from the enterovirus family. It can cause a rash or blisters on different parts of your body and in your mouth. It is most common in young children, but anyone can catch it. HFMD spreads easily and quickly. Outbreaks are common in schools and day cares.

How HFMD is spread (Transmission)

HFMD is spread from person to person. HFMD can spread through contact with:

- Droplets with virus particles made after a person sneezes, coughs, or talks.
- Objects and surfaces that have virus particles (doorknobs, toys, phones, countertops, etc.)
- Feces (for example, when you change diapers)
- Fluid from blisters

Symptoms of HFMD

Symptoms of HFMD can include:

- Fever
- Sore Throat
- Skin rash and blisters (commonly found on the hands and feet)
- Mouth sores, which can also cause:
  - Trouble eating and drinking
  - Drooling more than usual
  - Only wanting drinks that are cold

When to see a doctor

HFMD isn't a serious illness for most people, but it can cause severe symptoms or complications for some people. You should see a doctor if:

- You can't drink enough water to stay hydrated
- You have a fever lasting longer than three days
- Symptoms don't go away after 10 days
- You have a week immune system
- Symptoms are severe
- A very young child has HFMD, especially younger than six months old

Treatment and Exclusion for HFMD

HFMD usually goes away in seven to 10 days. There is no medicine specifically for this disease, but there are some things you can do to feel better:

- Use over-the-counter medicine to treat the fever and pain.
- Ensure you or your child are staying hydrated by drinking plenty of liquids

In general, children do not need to be excluded from the school or childcare setting unless they:

- Have a fever
- Have uncontrolled drooling
- Don't feel well enough to participate in class

Preventing HFMD

There is currently no vaccine to protect against the viruses that cause HFMD. To help prevent catching or spreading HFMD you should:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers, using the toilet, and coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Help children wash their hands and keep blisters clean.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared items, including toys and doorknobs.
- Avoid close contact with an infected person, such as hugging or kissing them.

For additional information, please visit:
Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD)| General Information | CDC
You may also contact the Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services at (304) 558-5358