
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

What is **Hand, foot and mouth disease**?



Hand, foot and mouth disease is a common illness of infants and children. It is different disease than foot-and-mouth disease of cattle, sheep and swine. Although the names are similar, the two diseases are not related at all and are caused by different viruses.

What are the symptoms of **Hand, foot and mouth disease**?

Hand, foot and mouth disease is characterized by fever, sores in the mouth, and a rash with blisters. It begins with a mild fever, poor appetite, malaise (“feeling sick”), and frequently a sore throat. One or two days after the fever begins, sores develop in the mouth. They begin as small red spots that blister and then often become ulcers. They are usually located on the tongue, gums, and inside of the cheeks. The skin rash develops over 1 to 2 days with flat or raised red spots, some with blisters. The rash does not itch, and it is usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. It may also appear on the buttocks. A person may only have only the rash

How do you get it?

Hand, foot and mouth disease is moderately contagious. Infection is spread from person to person by direct contact with nose and throat discharges or the stool of infected persons. A person is most contagious the first week of the illness. Hand, foot and mouth disease is not transmitted to or from pets or other animals.

How can you protect yourself and your family from **Hand, foot and mouth disease**?

No specific treatment is available for this or other enterovirus infections. Symptomatic treatment is given to provide relief from fever, aches, or pain from the mouth ulcers. Preventative measures include frequent hand washing, especially after diaper changes; disinfection of contaminated surfaces and washing soiled articles of clothing. Children are often excluded from child care programs, schools or other group settings during the first few days of the illness. These measures may reduce the spread of infection, but they will not completely interrupt it.

Any questions, contact Volusia County Health Department, (386) 274-0651 or (386) 274-0633.