North Monterey County Unified School District

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HAND, FOOT, MOUTH DISEASE - FACT SHEET

DEFINITION:

- Hand, Foot and Mouth disease is a common illness of infants and children under age 10 years. Very rare in adults.
- It has absolutely nothing to do with Hoof and Mouth disease of cattle.
- It is a viral infection with rash and fever. It is not a dangerous disease.
- It is more common during summer than winter months.
- It is diagnosed when a doctor looks at a child and decides the rash looks like Hand Foot Mouth Disease. Doctors do NOT generally use laboratory tests to determine if their diagnosis is correct.

CAUSE:

Hand, foot mouth disease is caused by a class of viruses called "enteroviruses ", and the most common enterovirus that causes these symptoms is coxsackievirus A16.

CHARACTERISTICS:

A. Initial Symptoms

- mild fever,
- poor appetite,
- malaise ("feeling sick"),
- frequently also sore throat
- At this stage, one cannot tell it is Hand Foot Mouth Disease.

B. Later Symptoms (within first 2 days)

- Tender sores may develop in mouth
- Mouth sores begin as small red spots that blister and then often become ulcers.
- Usual locations for mouth sores are on the tongue, gums, and inside of the cheeks.
- Skin rash may also develop
- Flat or raised red spots, some with blisters and not itchy; Usually located on palms of the hands and soles of feet, but may appear on the buttocks.
- Often, only rash or only mouth ulcers.
- Most children recover within 7 – 10 days.

MODE OF TRANSMISSION & CONTROL

- It is moderately contagious.
- Spread by direct contact with nose and throat discharges, saliva, fluid from blisters, or the stool of infected persons.
- Most contagious during the first week of the illness
- Incubation Period: After contact, it will take 3-7 days for those who are prone to the disease to show symptoms.
- It is not transmitted to or from pets, or other animals.
- Most people who get this infection will not have any symptoms at all; Younger children have more symptoms.
- You cannot get this disease twice from exact same virus. But, another enterovirus can cause similar symptoms.

HOME & SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

- There is no treatment for this disease. The disease takes its course and then goes away by itself.
- Medications may be taken to alleviate fever and discomfort (e.g., Tylenol / Acetaminophen); Cold foods (popsicles) may make mouth sores feel better.
- Exclude students from school if they:
    - Have fever
    - Feel too ill to attend school
    - Blisters that are in the mouth are accompanied by drooling
    - The sores on the student's hands are wet or "weeping"
    - Stools are too loose to be contained.
- Good hand washing technique
- Remind students to avoid close contact (e.g., kissing, sharing utensils)
- Remind custodians to clean surfaces contaminated with drool or stool.