



## **Re: Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are writing to you to let you know that several children have been away from school/nursery with Hand Foot and Mouth virus.

### **Hand, Foot and Mouth**

Hand, foot and mouth disease is a common childhood illness that can affect adults. It usually clears up by itself in 7 to 10 days. The first signs of hand, foot and mouth disease can be:

- a sore throat
- a high temperature, above 38C
- not wanting to eat

After a few days mouth ulcers and a rash will appear.

You can't take antibiotics or medicines to cure hand, foot and mouth disease – it has to run its course. It usually gets better in 7 to 10 days. See your GP if:

- your symptoms don't improve after 7 to 10 days
- you or your child has a very high temperature, or feels hot and shivery
- you're worried about your child's symptoms
- your child is dehydrated – they're not peeing as often as usual
- you're pregnant and get hand, foot and mouth disease

Hand, foot and mouth disease is infectious. Check with your GP surgery before going. They may suggest a phone consultation

Hand, foot and mouth disease is easily passed on to other people. It's spread in coughs, sneezes and poo. You're infectious from a few days before you have any symptoms, but you're most likely to give it to others in the first 5 days after symptoms start. To reduce the risk of spreading hand, foot and mouth disease:

- wash your hands often with warm soapy water – and teach children to do so
- use tissues to trap germs when you cough or sneeze
- bin used tissues as quickly as possible
- don't share towels or household items – like cups or cutlery
- wash soiled bedding and clothing on a hot wash

### **Complications**

Children who have Hand, Foot and Mouth at the same time as impetigo could develop more serious infection so parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis (joint pain and swelling). If you are concerned for any reason please seek medical assistance immediately.

If your child has an underlying condition which affects their immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

If you have any questions please contact your GP.

Yours faithfully

South West Health Protection Team

UK Health Security Agency