

7 things you should know about Hand - Foot - Mouth disease (HFMD) to keep children safe.

Early Childhood Association

E.C.A

1 WHAT IS HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD)?

HFMD is an infectious disease caused by certain viruses. It is a common disease that has been around for many years.



2 WHO DOES IT AFFECT?

It affects all age groups, but young children, under the age of 5 years, are more likely to be infected.



3 HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR CHILD HAS HFMD?

A child with HFMD usually presents with the following symptoms:

- Fever for 2-3 days,
- Sore throat and runny nose.
- Rash (flat or raised red spots, some with blisters) on the hands (especially the palms), feet and occasionally on the buttocks.
- Mouth ulcers
- Poor appetite
- Vomiting and diarrhea



4 HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

HFMD is spread through direct contact with saliva, nasal discharge, faeces, or fluid from the blisters of an infected person. It can also be spread indirectly through articles contaminated by these secretions. A child is infectious throughout the duration of the illness.



5 IS HFMD SERIOUS?

In most cases, HFMD is mild. However, a few children who are infected with the EV71 strain of the virus can become very ill.



6 WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HFMD AT HOME?

- Take advice from your family doctor or pediatrician.
- Follow medications given by the doctor, do not self medicate or Google.
- Keep your child away from public places.
- Get everyone at home to wash his or her hands frequently with soap.
- Keep his toys, books, eating utensils, towels, and clothes separate from others.
- Inform school, kindergarten, or childcare centre as soon as possible. They can monitor other children closely and take additional precautions to prevent the spread of HFMD.
- Keep your child at home until he is fully recovered, after the expiry of the medical certificate (MC) given by the family doctor.
- Ensure your child is completely recovered before sending to school, kindergarten, or childcare center.



7 WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HFMD AT KINDERGARTEN/ CHILD CARE CENTRE?

- Childcare centers like kindergartens and daycares to be vigilant and observe children with fever for rashes, as it is contagious.
- If a child at your center has HFMD then ensure that the child is not attending the center, for the safety of other children.
- Do send school activities home so that the child does not miss the activities at the center.
- Clean items like toys, blocks with a safe child friendly liquid.
- Sand trays to be refilled with fresh sand.
- Immediately alert the other parents if any child at the center has been known to be infected with HFMD.

