



## Hand, foot, and mouth disease

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a common childhood viral illness. It causes blisters on the hands and feet, and ulcers in the mouth. It can be unpleasant; however, it is generally mild, and most people recover within a week or two. Although most common in children under 10, especially those under four, people of any age can get it, including adults. In the UK, it's most common in the late summer and early autumn.

**Please Note: - Hand, foot, and mouth disease has no relation to foot and mouth disease, which only affects cattle, sheep, and pigs.**

The virus can start to spread before you have any symptoms, but you're most likely to spread it to others in the first 5 days after symptoms start. You can be infectious for a few days before the rash appears, which makes the spread of the infection hard to control. Symptoms usually start 3 – 5 days after contact with someone with the virus. These symptoms usually last for between 7 to 10 days.

There is no specific treatment, however, there are measures to ease symptoms and discomfort - Your local pharmacy team will be able to offer advice on over the counter treatments available.

### Symptoms (the first signs can be)

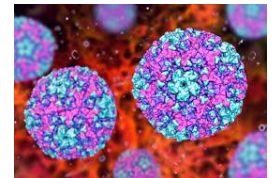
- A sore throat
- A high temperature
- Not wanting to eat
- After a few days, mouth ulcers/rash will appear

### How to manage symptoms

- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration – but avoid anything acidic as this may irritate the mouth ulcers
- Eat soft foods like yoghurt – avoid hot and spicy foods
- Take [Paracetamol](#) or [Ibuprofen](#) as prescribed to help ease a sore mouth or throat

### **Seek advice from your local GP if:**

- Your symptoms or your child's symptoms do not improve after 7 to 10 days
- You or your child has a very high temperature over 38°C, or feels hot and shivery
- Your child is dehydrated – they're not passing urine as often as usual
- You're pregnant and get hand, foot and mouth disease
- If you're pregnant and near your delivery date you should avoid contact with children who are infected with hand, foot and mouth disease, if possible



***Effective hand washing, respiratory hygiene and cleaning are essential in reducing the spread!*** The virus is spread by coughs and sneezes, direct contact with blisters and it is found in the faeces of infected children.

### **To reduce the risk of spreading hand, foot and mouth disease:**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water – and children's hands too (especially after toileting)
- Use tissues to trap germs when you cough or sneeze, throw away used tissues as quickly as possible
- Do not share towels or household items like cups or cutlery
- Wash soiled bedding and clothing on a hot wash

### **Staying off school or nursery**

The advice to schools, nurseries and parents is that children may attend school or nursery when they feel well enough, as keeping children off school/nursery for longer than this is unlikely to stop the virus spreading. There's no need to wait until all the blisters have healed. Please contact your school or nursery if your child is showing symptoms of hand, foot & mouth disease, and follow the schools' individual policies and procedures.

### **Resources available**

[Hand, foot and mouth disease - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Please tweet us at: LancsIPC <https://twitter.com/lancsipc>

Email us at:- [infectionprevention@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:infectionprevention@lancashire.gov.uk)