

## **HAND FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD)**

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) is a common disease in children caused by enteroviruses. HFMD is most contagious during the first week of the illness. After having had HFMD the child will normally have immunity, however there have been cases where a second infection with HFMD has occurred.

Symptoms start 3-7 days after exposure and usually begins with fever, poor appetite, tiredness and sore throat. One or two days after fever onset, painful 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, gum, and inside of the cheeks. There may also be skin rash that is non-itchy and, some with blisters. The rash is usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet; it may also appear on the buttocks and/or genitalia.

HFMD mainly spreads by contact with nose or throat discharges, saliva, fluid from vesicles, or after touching contaminated objects.

There is no specific treatment for HFMD. The infected person should drink plenty of water and take adequate rest, and may receive symptomatic treatment to reduce fever and pain from oral ulcers.

To avoid spreading the disease to other people in the household, please make sure that the infected person covers his/her mouth when coughing or sneezing; washes hands frequently and always after wiping/blowing nose, coughing and sneezing; and do not share eating utensils.

Should your child show any symptoms of HFMD, please keep your child at home and consult your doctor to have it confirmed. Should your doctor confirm that your child has HFMD, please keep your child at home until all vesicles have dried up and follow the guidelines from your doctor regarding when to send your child back to school. If your child has a confirmed case of HFMD, please inform the school as soon as possible.