



November 15, 2017

This letter is to inform you about Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease (HFMD). HFMD is a common viral infection that most often affects children. Although the name of this illness sounds similar to hoof-and-mouth disease of cattle, HFMD is a completely unrelated disease.

What are the symptoms of HFMD?

Symptoms may include a rash of flat, red spots that may blister on the fingers, palms of hands, buttocks, and soles of the feet. This rash may also develop into sores in the mouth. Additionally, fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough, and decreased appetite may be present. These symptoms usually begin 3 to 7 days after exposure to the virus and appear in stages, not all at once. It is important to keep in mind, not everyone will get all of these symptoms. Most infected people recover in a week or two.

How is HFMD spread?

The virus is spread through coughing and sneezing, through the fluid from blisters, and through contact with the infected person's stool (feces). Children with HFMD generally do not need to be excluded from school or childcare unless the child is running a fever, is particularly uncomfortable and is not able to participate in normal school or childcare activities, or has open blisters that cannot be covered with bandages. Children may return to school when they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and/or once blisters have fully scabbed over or can be covered.

How is HFMD diagnosed and treated?

A health care provider can identify HFMD by the symptoms reported, and the appearance and location of the blisters. There is no specific treatment for the virus. Symptoms such as fever and pain from mouth blisters may be treated as needed. The drinking of fluids should be encouraged to prevent dehydration.

How do you control the spread?

****Make sure adults and children wash hands frequently and thoroughly with warm water and soap****

- Cover noses and mouths with a tissue or arm when coughing or sneezing
- When using a tissue, wash hands well afterwards. Dispose of tissues after each use
- After using the bathroom, wash hands thoroughly with warm water and soap
- After changing a diaper, wash both your hands and the baby's hands with warm water and soap
- Clean and disinfect around your home after an infection to decrease spread in your household
- Keep your child home when he or she has a fever or open blisters that cannot be covered with bandages

How do I get more information?

For more information about Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease, contact your healthcare provider, school nurse, or Pickens County Health Department. You may also find more information on the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/handfootmouthdisease/index.html>

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