

HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE RESOURCES

Common Signs and Symptoms

HFM disease (not to be confused with hoof and mouth disease, a totally unrelated illness that affects barnyard animals and livestock) causes painful blisters in the throat, tongue, gums, hard palate, or inside the cheeks. Blisters are red with a small bubble of fluid on top and often turn into ulcers. The soles of the feet and the palms of the hands also may be affected with a rash that can look like flat red spots or red blisters.

Occasionally, a pink rash may be seen on other parts of the body, such as the buttocks and thighs. However, some children with HFM disease develop no symptoms, or if they do, may only have sores in the back of the throat.

It can be hard for a parent to tell if a child (especially a preverbal child) has HFM disease if sores are only inside the mouth or throat. Very young kids may not be able to complain of a sore throat, but if a child stops eating or drinking, or wants to eat or drink less often, it's a signal to parents that something is wrong.

A child also might:

- develop fever, muscle aches, or other flu-like symptoms
- become irritable or sleep more than usual
- begin drooling (due to painful swallowing)
- gravitate toward cold fluids

HFM is contagious and can spread through contact with feces, saliva, mucus from the nose, or fluid from the blisters. Even after recovery, kids can pass the virus in their stool for several weeks so still can spread the infection to others even though they're no longer sick.

[Hand washing](#) is the best protection. Remind everyone in your family to wash their hands frequently, particularly after using the toilet, changing a diaper, before meals, and before preparing food. Shared toys in childcare centers should be cleaned often with a disinfectant because these viruses can live on objects for several days.

Keep kids home from school and childcare while they have a fever or open blisters on the skin and mouth.

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/skin/hfm.html>

National Center for Homeopathy

www.nationalcenterforhomeopathy.org