

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child may have been exposed to hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD). Please read the following information so you know what symptoms to watch for, how to prevent HFMD, and how to treat it. Thank You.

Cortney Hesse, RN, Sparta School Nurse

HAND, FOOT, AND MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD) INFORMATION

HFMD is a common viral illness in infants and children. The symptoms begin 3 to 6 days after exposure to the virus and include the following: fever, poor appetite, sore throat, and not feeling well. One to two days after the fever, painful sores usually develop in the mouth. These sores begin as small red spots that blister then become ulcers. These sores are usually on the tongue, gums, and inside of the cheeks. One to two days later a non-itchy skin rash may develop on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, buttocks, or genitalia. An infected child may have only the rash or only the mouth sores.

HFMD is spread by contact with an infected person's saliva, throat secretions, blister fluid, or stool. Infected persons are most contagious during the first week of the illness, although they may continue to be contagious for several weeks after the symptoms have gone away.

There is no treatment for HFMD, but symptoms such as fever and mouth pain can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) and mouthwashes or sprays that numb pain. Children sick with HFMD should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

Prevention is simply to follow good hygiene practice such as washing hands with soap and water frequently and especially after using the bathroom. Avoid close contact (kissing, hugging, sharing eating utensils or cups, etc.) with sick students.

More serious complications from HFMD infection are rare but include viral meningitis or encephalitis. Symptoms include fever, headache, stiff neck, or back pain. Children experiencing these symptoms need to see a health care provider immediately.

**Information about HFMD was obtained from the Center of Disease Control (CDC). For more information go to <http://www.cdc.gov/> or contact Cortney Hesse, RN, Sparta School Nurse at 269-3151 ext. 6204.