



Altoona Area School District Health Services

As we are approaching the cold and flu season, there are other viral illnesses which can also occur such as Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease. Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) is a common viral illness that usually affects infants and children, but can sometimes occur in adults. It is characterized by fever, sores in the mouth, and a rash with blisters.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The first symptoms of HFMD usually start three to five days after exposure to the virus and include:

- Fever
- Reduced appetite
- Sore throat
- A feeling of being unwell
- One to two days after the fever starts, painful sores can develop in the mouth and a skin rash with red spots or blisters may develop on the palms of hands and soles of feet

If your child is exhibiting these symptoms, please contact your health care provider for evaluation and advice on when you should return to school.

TRANSMISSION

The viruses that cause HFMD can be found in an infected person's:

- Nose and throat secretions
- Blister fluid
- Feces

An infected person may spread the virus to another person through:

- Close personal contact
- The air (through coughing and sneezing)
- Contact with feces and/or contaminated surfaces

TREATMENT

There is no specific treatment for HFMD since it is a virus, but you may try this to relieve symptoms:

- Taking over-the-counter medications to relieve pain and fever
- Using mouthwashes or sprays that numb mouth pain

PREVENTION

HFMD is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing or contact with blister fluid or feces of an infected person. You can lower your risk of being infected by:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water-practice good hand hygiene
- Disinfecting dirty surfaces and soiled items
- Avoiding close contact with infected people

Generally, a person with HFMD is most contagious during the first week of illness. Once a person is infected with a virus that causes HFMD, they develop immunity to that virus and will not become infected again.

This fact sheet is to provide general information. Please contact your health care provider for specific information or if you have questions.