

HAND, FOOT, & MOUTH DISEASE

NOLENSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE
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BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A common childhood infection with symptoms that begin in the mouth and throat. Hand, foot, and mouth disease most often affects children under the age of 10. Adults may get the infection, but it is less common.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Sore throat with blisters and sores in the mouth and throat lining.
- Sudden fever that is usually mild.
- Rash with blisters on the hands, feet, and groin.
- Refusal to eat.
- Stomach pain or headache (sometimes).

CAUSES

Viral infection commonly caused by coxsackieviruses. The germs are spread from person to person or by touching an object (such as a toy) that has the germs on it. It takes about 3 to 6 days after exposure for the symptoms to start. Outbreaks may occur in nursery schools or child-care centers.

RISK INCREASES WITH

Summer and fall seasons.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- No specific preventive measures.
- Try to prevent exposure of infants and young children to anyone with an infection. Wash hands often to prevent spread of germs.
- Pregnant women should consult their obstetric provider if they are exposed to an infected person.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The infection is usually mild and complete recovery occurs in about a week. It rarely recurs once someone has had the infection.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- The infection may be more serious in some infants and dehydration can occur.
- Other complications are rare.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Home care is usually all that is required for this infection. See your health care provider if you are concerned about the symptoms.
- Your health care provider can diagnose the infection by an exam of the affected mouth and skin area. Other medical tests are normally not needed.
- There is no specific treatment for the infection, but treatment may help relieve pain and fever symptoms.
- Rinse the mouth with salt water (1/2 teaspoon salt to 1 cup water) after eating, if the child is old enough to rinse without swallowing.
- Use separate dishes or disposable plates and cups to help avoid spreading the infection to other children in the family.

MEDICATIONS

To reduce high fever or for pain, you may use nonprescription drugs such as acetaminophen. Don't use aspirin in young children. Antibiotics are not effective for this infection.

ACTIVITY

Have the child get extra rest at home until any fever is gone. Children may return to school or daycare while they still have the rash.

DIET

Encourage the child to increase their fluid and soft food intake. This may include milk, liquid gelatin, ice cream, custard, or special products that you can buy at grocery or drug stores.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- Your child has symptoms of hand, foot and mouth disease.
- Symptoms get worse or do not improve.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page