



February 1, 2010

Dear Colleagues

A pre-school student on Island has a confirmed case of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease.

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) is a common viral illness of infants and children. The disease causes fever and blister-like eruptions in the mouth and/or a skin rash. HFMD is often confused with foot-and-mouth (also called hoof-and-mouth) disease, a disease of cattle, sheep, and swine; however, the two diseases are not related—they are caused by different viruses.

Please see below information on HFMD as outlined on the www.cdc.gov website; however, if you suspect your child may have HFMD, please contact his/her doctor and keep him/her home from school until he/she has the doctor's okay to return.

Symptoms

- The disease usually begins with a fever, poor appetite, malaise (feeling vaguely unwell), and often with a sore throat.
- One or 2 days after fever onset, painful sores usually develop in the mouth. They begin as small red spots that blister and then often become ulcers. The sores are usually located on the tongue, gums, and inside of the cheeks.
- A non-itchy skin rash develops over 1–2 days. The rash has flat or raised red spots, sometimes with blisters. The rash is usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet; it may also appear on the buttocks and/or genitalia.
- A person with HFMD may have only the rash or only the mouth sores.





How It Is Spread

- Infection is spread from person to person by direct contact with infectious virus. Infectious virus is found in the nose and throat secretions, saliva, blister fluid, and stool of infected persons. The virus is most often spread by persons with unwashed, virus-contaminated hands and by contact with virus-contaminated surfaces.
- Infected persons are most contagious during the first week of the illness.
- The viruses that cause HFMD can remain in the body for weeks after a patient's symptoms have gone away. This means that the infected person can still pass the infection to other people even though he/she appears well. Also, some persons who are infected and excreting the virus, including most adults, may have no symptoms.
- HFMD is not transmitted to or from pets or other animals.

Treatment and Medical Management

- There is no specific treatment for HFMD.
- Symptoms can be treated to provide relief from pain from mouth sores and from fever and aches:
 - Fever can be treated with antipyretics (drugs that reduce fevers).
 - Pain can be treated with acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or other over-the-counter pain relievers.
 - Mouthwashes or sprays that numb pain can be used to lessen mouth pain.
- Fluid intake should be enough to prevent dehydration (lack of body fluids). If moderate-to-severe dehydration develops, it can be treated medically by giving fluids through the veins.

Prevention

- A specific preventive for HFMD is not available, but the risk of infection can be lowered by following good hygiene practices.
- Good hygiene practices that can lower the risk of infection include
 - Washing hands frequently and correctly (see [Clean Hands Save Lives!](#)) and especially after changing diapers and after using the toilet
 - Cleaning dirty surfaces and soiled items, including toys, first with soap and water and then disinfecting them by cleansing with a solution of chlorine bleach (made by adding 1 tablespoon of bleach to 4 cups of water)





DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION SERVICES
building excellence together

Department of Education Services, 130 Thomas Russell Avenue,
P.O. Box 910, Grand Cayman, KY1-1103, CAYMAN ISLANDS

t. (345) 945-1199 • f. (345) 945-1457 • w. www.brighterfutures.gov.ky

- o Avoiding close contact (kissing, hugging, sharing eating utensils or cups, etc.) with persons with HFMD

Yours sincerely,

Shirley Wahler (Mrs.) Cert. Hon
Chief Education Officer

