

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Recently we have had reports of individuals infected with Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease (HFMD) in our area. HFMD is a common illness that usually affects infants and children younger than 5 years old. But sometimes older children and adults can get it too. Symptoms may include:

- a poor appetite
- sore throat
- fever
- general feeling of not feeling well
- small blisters in the mouth
- blisters or red spots on the palms of hands or soles of feet

HFMD is usually not serious, and most people recover without medical treatment in 7 to 10 days. It is caused by a virus and complications are not common. No specific treatment is available for HFMD. Treatment is only for fever, aches, or pain from the hand, foot, or mouth ulcers. (Tylenol may be helpful in treating these symptoms).

HFMD is most contagious during the first week of illness. But sometimes people can be contagious for days or weeks even after symptoms go away. Some people may not develop any symptoms, but they can still spread the virus to others. This is why people should always practice good handwashing and covering their coughs and sneezes. Infection is spread by close personal contact, through the air (coughing/sneezing), and by contact with feces, or contaminated objects and surfaces.

The risk of infection can be lowered by:

- Washing hands often with soap and water, especially after changing diapers and using the toilet.
- Trapping respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing, by covering the mouth and nose with clothing fabric at the inside of the elbow area.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and soiled items, including toys.
- Avoiding close contact such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils or cups with people with HFMD.

If your child is running a fever or not feeling well you should keep them home until they feel better. Exclusion from school is not recommended for individuals who have symptoms of HFMD, but are otherwise acting normally and do not have a fever. Every effort is being made to practice good hygiene and decrease the risk to our students and staff while they are at school. Please contact Stacy Chiles if you have any concerns.

Sincerely,
Stacy Chiles, RN, CSN
School Nurse