

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease, Pediatric

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is an illness that is caused by a type of germ (*virus*). The illness causes a sore throat, sores in the mouth, fever, and a rash on the hands and feet. It is usually not serious. Most people are better within 1–2 weeks.

This illness can spread easily (*contagious*). It can be spread through contact with:



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- Snot (*nasal discharge*) of an infected person.
- Spit (*saliva*) of an infected person.
- Poop (*stool*) of an infected person.

HOME CARE

General Instructions

- Have your child rest until he or she feels better.
- Give over-the-counter and prescription medicines only as told by your child's doctor. **Do not** give your child aspirin.
- Wash your hands and your child's hands often.
- Keep your child away from child care programs, schools, or other group settings for a few days or until the fever is gone.

Managing Pain and Discomfort

- If your child is old enough to rinse and spit, have your child rinse his or her mouth with a salt-water mixture 3–4 times per day or as needed. To make a salt-water mixture, completely dissolve ½-1 tsp of salt in 1 cup of warm water. This can help to reduce pain from the mouth sores. Your child's doctor may also recommend other rinse solutions to treat mouth sores.
- Take these actions to help reduce your child's discomfort when he or she is eating:
 - Try many types of foods to see what your child will tolerate. Aim for a balanced diet.
 - Have your child eat soft foods.
 - Have your child avoid foods and drinks that are salty, spicy, or acidic.

- Give your child cold food and drinks. These may include water, sport drinks, milk, milkshakes, frozen ice pops, slushies, and sherbets.
- Avoid bottles for younger children and infants if drinking from them causes pain. Use a cup, spoon, or syringe.

GET HELP IF:

- Your child's symptoms do not get better within 2 weeks.
- Your child's symptoms get worse.
- Your child has pain that is not helped by medicine.
- Your child is very fussy.
- Your child has trouble swallowing.
- Your child is drooling a lot.
- Your child has sores or blisters on the lips or outside of the mouth.
- Your child has a fever for more than 3 days.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- Your child has signs of body fluid loss (*dehydration*):
 - Peeing (*urinating*) only very small amounts or peeing fewer than 3 times in 24 hours.
 - Pee that is very dark.
 - Dry mouth, tongue, or lips.
 - Decreased tears or sunken eyes.
 - Dry skin.
 - Fast breathing.
 - Decreased activity or being very sleepy.
 - Poor color or pale skin.
 - Fingertips take more than 2 seconds to turn pink again after a gentle squeeze.
 - Weight loss.
- Your child who is younger than 3 months has a temperature of 100°F (38°C) or higher.
- Your child has a bad headache, a stiff neck, or a change in behavior.
- Your child has chest pain or has trouble breathing.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.