

Important message from Nurse Tammy:

Hand, Foot and Mouth has recently been reported in our school population.

WHAT IS HAND, FOOT and MOUTH

Hand, Foot and Mouth is a common viral illness. It is usually seen in young children who spend extended time together - but it may also be seen in adults. The average incubation period is 3-6 days. Hand, Foot and Mouth is spread through feces, saliva, respiratory secretions and direct contact with the blisters.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The classic appearance of Hand, Foot and Mouth is a sudden onset of sore throat, moderate fever (approximately 101°), fatigue and loss of appetite. Within 1-2 days blister-like sores may appear in/around the mouth, on the hands and feet and sometimes on the buttocks. The sores may be painful but usually heal in 7-10 days. Mouth sores may limit the foods a child will want to eat. The greatest communicability is during the time when the person is feeling ill, although it is possible to remain contagious for several weeks.

Treatment for Hand, Foot and Mouth is usually not necessary. You may desire to lessen the discomfort and pain caused by the symptoms but do not give aspirin unless directed to do so by your health care professional. Reye's Syndrome is rare but serious and has been associated with having recently taken aspirin when ill with a viral illness.

HAND, FOOT and MOUTH AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Since Hand, Foot and Mouth initially looks similar to the common cold it can be difficult to identify until the blisters appear. By this time the child has already been contagious for 1-2 days. Children with the following symptoms may be excluded from school:

- a fever of 100° F or higher - or other symptoms that cause the child to not be able
- to participate in the school day
- open, weeping blisters

PREVENTION

The following recommendations may help prevent the spread of Hand, Foot and Mouth:

- wash hands well, especially after changing diapers and going to the bathroom
- cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- wash toys and other surfaces that have saliva on them

Please contact your family medical provider or school nurse if you have questions.

