



## *Hawaii State Department of Health*

### *Disease Investigation Branch*

*Oahu 586-4586, Maui 984-8213, Hilo 933-0912,*

*Kona 322-4877, Kauai 241-3563*

---

## **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease**

### **What is hand, foot, and mouth disease?**

Hand, food and mouth disease is a mild, but highly contagious viral infection common in young children. Hand, foot and mouth disease is characterized by the appearance of sores inside the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet.

### **How do you get it?**

The illness spreads by direct contact with nose and throat discharges, saliva, fluid from blisters, or the stool of someone with the infection. It is also spread through unwashed hands or contaminated surfaces.

### **What are the symptoms?**

The illness commonly begins with mild fever, sore throat, loss of appetite, and a general feeling of not being well. In the next 2 days, sores commonly appear inside the mouth and on the tongue. The illness often produces a sore throat and pain upon swallowing. In most children, but less often in infected adults, the sores are accompanied by a rash that appears on the hands and/or feet.

### **When do the symptoms start?**

The symptoms generally appear 3 to 6 days after being infected with the virus.

### **What is the treatment for hand, foot, and mouth disease?**

There is no specific treatment for this disease. It typically resolves on its own.

### **Should infected persons stay home from school or work?**

Yes. In general persons should stay home from school or work as long as they have fever, diarrhea, cough, runny nose and/or rash (sores).

### **How can you keep from getting it?**

Wash hands thoroughly and frequently when handling or disposing of materials used by an infected person. Also, wash hands after using the toilet or changing a diaper, and before preparing food and eating. When soap and water are not available, use hand wipes or gels treated with germ-killing alcohol.

Disinfect common areas and shared items such as toys and pacifiers often-- the virus can live on these objects for days.

Teach children good hygiene and explain to them why it is best not to put their fingers, hands or any other objects in their mouth.

When practical, reduce person-to-person contact with infected individuals.

### **For more information, see the CDC's website at:**

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/enterovirus/hfhf.htm>