

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

School Name
School Nurse Name
Phone Number
Date

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you that there has been a case of hand, foot, and mouth disease identified at the school. For confidentiality purposes, no further information can be provided regarding the case but you are receiving this letter because your child may have been exposed. HFMD is not a serious illness but is highly contagious and it's important to monitor your child closely for any symptoms.

What is hand, foot and mouth disease? HFMD is a very common illness caused by a group of viruses, usually affecting young children although teens and adults are also susceptible. It causes blisters on the hands and feet, and mouth ulcers inside the cheeks and on the tongue. Please note that HFMD is not the same as foot and mouth disease that is found in cows and other livestock.

What are other possible symptoms? HFMD typically starts with a fever, sore throat and runny nose before the rash and blisters appear. Symptoms typically last 7–10 days although peeling of the hands and feet can occur for up to 2 weeks. From the time your child was exposed, it usually takes 3–6 days for symptoms to show up.

How is it treated? There is no specific treatment or cure for HFMD. Symptoms resolve on their own and most children can be provided comfort care at home to relieve symptoms and prevent dehydration. If you suspect your child may have HFMD, consult your pediatrician for further guidance on using over-the-counter pain medications and soothing mouth rinses that can help ease any discomfort.

What are the risks? Dehydration is the biggest risk associated with HFMD. Children with HFMD should drink plenty of fluids and be closely monitored for signs of dehydration.

How does it spread? The virus causing HFMD is primarily spread through person-to-person contact either via the respiratory tract (coughs and sneezes) or fecal-to-oral, as the virus can also be found in the feces of infected children. Some children infected with the virus do not have symptoms but can still pass it to others.

How long should children with HFMD stay away from school? Children with HFMD can attend school as long as they are feeling well enough to do so, do not have significant open blisters, and they meet all other exclusion criteria. Excluding children with HFMD from school unnecessarily does not reduce transmission of HFMD in the school setting.

What should you do now? Monitor your child closely for symptoms of HFMD and notify your pediatrician and school nurse if you suspect infection. To help prevent spread, encourage good hand washing habits, teach appropriate sneeze and cough hygiene, disinfect surfaces, and discourage sharing of food, drinks, and utensils.

Thank you for your careful attention to the information in this notice and for your diligence in helping to keep our school community as safe and healthy as possible. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the school nurse with any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

School Nurse Name