

KEY FACTS

ABOUT HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

What is hand, foot, and mouth disease?



Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) is a viral infection that commonly affects infants and children under 10 years. It is caused by a group of viruses known as enteroviruses, which infect millions each year globally. The condition is generally mild and self-limiting, meaning those affected typically recover within 7 to 10 days.



How is HFMD transmitted?



- Direct contact – touching an infected person's saliva, nasal secretions, or blisters.
- Droplets – coughing or sneezing spreads the virus in the air.
- Contaminated surfaces and objects – shared toys, stationery, and utensils.
- Contact with faeces – poor hand hygiene after using the toilet or changing diapers.

What are the symptoms of HFMD?



Symptoms usually start 3 to 7 days after infection and last 7 to 10 days. Common signs and symptoms include fever, sore throat, fatigue, loss of appetite and small blisters on the inside of the mouth, sides of the tongue, palms of the hands, and soles of the feet.



How is HFMD treated?



There is no specific vaccine or treatment for HFMD. Individual symptoms such as fever and pain from sores can be treated with medication. Affected individuals are encouraged to rest and drink plenty of water. Some people may recover without taking treatment or medication.

Please note: Hand, foot, and mouth disease does not occur in animals and should not be confused with foot and mouth disease (also called hoof-and-mouth disease), which affects animals such as sheep and cattle.