



Information on Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease (HFMD)

There have recently been some cases of Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease in school. Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) is a common viral illness of infants and children and is not a serious illness. The disease causes fever and blister-like eruptions in the mouth and/or a skin rash. HFMD is often confused with 'foot-and-mouth' disease. However, the two diseases are not related—they are caused by different viruses. Humans do not get the animal disease, and animals do not get the human disease.

Children should not return to school until the mouth ulcers have gone & the last blister has got a scab on it, regardless of where this is on the body. Blisters contain live virus and the virus from the mouth ulcers can be spread by coughs & sneezing.

It usually begins with a fever, poor appetite, feeling unwell and often with a sore throat. One or 2 days later painful sores usually develop in the mouth. They begin as small red spots that blister and then often become ulcers. A non-itchy skin rash develops over 1–2 days. The rash has flat or raised red spots, sometimes with blisters. The rash is usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet; it may also appear in other places on the body. A person with HFMD may have only the rash or only the mouth sores.

Children can still be infectious for several weeks longer as the virus may be passed out with the faeces for several weeks. It is impractical to exclude children from school or nursery once the symptoms have gone. However, it is sensible to maintain good hygiene to reduce the chance of passing on the virus. In particular, hand washing after going to the toilet.

Yours sincerely

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