

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

What is it?	Hand, foot and mouth disease is caused by a virus. It most commonly affects children under 10 years of age and occurs mainly in the summer and early fall.
What are the signs and symptoms?	<p>Signs and symptoms of hand, foot and mouth disease usually start suddenly and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fever ➤ Sore throat ➤ Headache ➤ Small painful blisters inside the mouth on the tongue and gums (which may last 4–6 days) ➤ Blisters that may appear on the palms of a child's hand, on their fingers and on the soles of their feet <p>Some people with hand, foot and mouth disease may not have any symptoms.</p>
How is it spread?	<p>Hand, foot and mouth disease is spread by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Breathing in air contaminated with the virus after an infected person has coughed or sneezed ➤ Touching the nose and throat secretions of an infected person and then touching your own eyes, nose or mouth ➤ Touching an infected child's stool (e.g., when changing a diaper or assisting a child with toileting) ➤ Touching objects contaminated with the virus. <p>Hand, foot and mouth disease spreads very easily in child care centres and places where children are close together.</p>
Incubation period	Usually 3–6 days following contact with an infected person.
When is the person contagious?	Usually for the first week of the illness. However, the virus can remain in the body for weeks after the start of the illness.
How to prevent the spread of the illness to other children	<p>A child with hand, foot and mouth disease may go to school or a child care centre if they feel well enough to attend.</p> <p>Carefully dispose of (or clean, if applicable) articles soiled by discharge from an infected child's nose, throat or stool.</p>

For more information see:

[HealthLink BC File #64 – Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease](#)

