

YOU SHOULD CONTACT YOUR GP OR THE NMH IF:

- Symptoms don't improve after 7 to 10 days
- You are dehydrated (not peeing as often)
- If blisters start oozing pus or surrounding skin is red
- If blisters are in genital area (to confirm its HFMD)

Please call your GP or The NMH before attending for an appointment if you have HFMD.

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If you experience sudden dislike of bright lights, headache, neck stiffness, drowsiness or confusion, attend your nearest hospital emergency department immediately.



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The National Maternity Hospital



**HAND, FOOT AND
MOUTH DISEASE
LEAFLET**

HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR PATIENTS

Hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) is a common illness typically affecting children, although adults can get it too. It is a contagious viral infection. Usually the illness is mild and clears up by itself within 7 to 10 days. Serious complications rarely occur. HFMD is not related to the 'foot and mouth disease' which affects farm animals.

SYMPTOMS

Typically, symptoms develop 3 to 6 days after becoming infected. It may manifest with temperature of over 38°C, feeling unwell and not wanting to eat. Sore throat is common, followed by mouth ulcers and small spots/rash on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. Spots can sometimes appear on the buttocks, legs and genitals. They will look pink, red or darker than surrounding skin, depending on your skin tone and may turn into blisters. The rash looks similar to chickenpox except it is not usually itchy but can be quite tender. Mouth ulcers can be painful, lasting up to a week. It tends to be a milder illness for older children and adults. You can get HFMD more than once but it's usually not as severe the next time.



TREATMENT OF HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

Antibiotics don't work for HFMD. This is because it's a viral infection. It usually gets better on its own within 7-10 days.



• How to ease symptoms:

Take pain relief medication for sore mouth. Drink regular fluids. Eat soft foods like yoghurt, soup, potatoes and iced lollies. Avoid hot, spicy or acidic foods. Rinse the mouth with warm, salty water. Wear loose clothing. Your pharmacist can advise on treatments such as mouth ulcer gels, sprays and mouthwashes that relieve pain.

For the genital area, protect the area with nappy rash cream and take oral pain relief medication.

HFMD IN PREGNANCY

HFMD doesn't normally cause any problems for pregnant women or unborn babies. However, avoid close contact with anyone who has HFMD. This is because:

- Having high temperatures in the first 3 months of pregnancy may lead to miscarriage, although this is very rare.
- Developing HFMD shortly before birth may mean the baby is born with a mild version of it.

Speak to your GP, consultant or midwife if you have been in contact with someone with HFMD.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF HFMD

HFMD is spread through coughs, sneezes and poo. You can become infected if you touch the blisters, poo or saliva of someone with HFMD. It is infectious a few days before symptoms start, but especially in the first 5 days. The virus can remain in poo for several weeks after symptoms stop.

To reduce the risk of spreading HFMD:

- Wash hands regularly, especially after toileting, preparing food, handling nappies or touching used tissues.
- Use tissues when you cough/sneeze and bin them.
- Don't share towels or household items e.g. cutlery.
- Wash soiled bedding and clothing on a hot wash.
- Do not put your child's soother in your mouth.
- Don't deliberately pierce blisters, as the fluid is infectious, it causes pain and could cause further infection.

