

# Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD)

## Public Health Guidance for Schools or Childcare Settings

### Overview

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) is a common, viral illness that primarily affects infants and young children. It causes fever, mouth sores, and a rash on the hands, feet, and sometimes the buttocks. HFMD spreads easily in childcare and classroom environments through close contact, contaminated surfaces, and unwashed hands.

### How It Spreads

- Respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing
- Contact with saliva, nasal discharge, or blister fluid
- Touching contaminated toys, doorknobs, or other surfaces
- Contact with stool (e.g., diaper changes)



<https://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/about/index.html>

The virus can remain in stool for **weeks** after symptoms improve.

### Prevention in Childcare Centers and Schools

- **Hand hygiene:** Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after diaper changes, using the bathroom, or caring for someone who is sick.
- **Surface Cleaning:** Disinfect shared toys, tables, and high touch areas between uses.
- **Respiratory Etiquette:** Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes and to follow up with proper hand hygiene.
- **Change Contaminated Fabrics:** Contaminated clothing, sheets, or mats should be changed as soon as possible. While handling contaminated fabrics, disposable gloves should be worn and followed with proper hand hygiene.
- **Stay Home When Sick:** Exclude children and staff with fevers or open blisters until 24-hours fever-free without the use of fever suppressing medication.
- **Communication:** It is recommended to notify parents and staff when there is at least one case in the classroom. When there are cases above your facility's baseline, notify the local health department.

### Contact

Contact your local health department with any questions or concerns or to report multiple cases of HFMD.



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