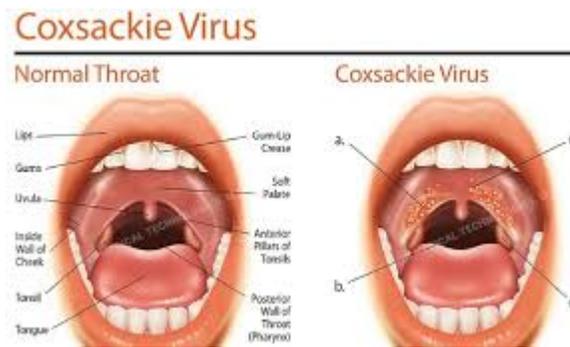


## Coxsackie Virus a.k.a "Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease"



Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a common viral illness that usually affects infants and children younger than 5 years old. However, it can sometimes occur in adults. It usually starts with a fever, reduced appetite, sore throat, and a feeling of being unwell (malaise). One or two days after the fever starts, painful sores can develop in the mouth (herpangina). They begin, often in the back of the mouth, as small red spots that blister and can become ulcers. (CDC.gov, 2016)



A skin rash with red spots, and sometimes with blisters may present around the mouth

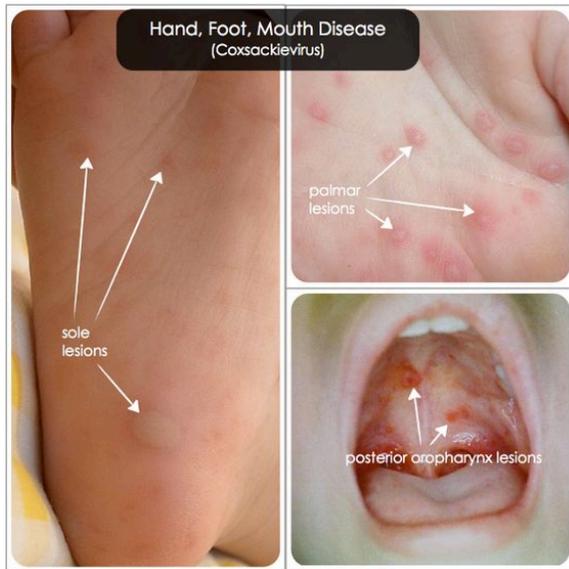


And may also develop over one or two days on the palms of the hands



And on the soles of the feet





Some people, especially young children, may get [dehydrated \(link to info\)](#) if they are not able to swallow enough liquids because of painful mouth sores.

Not everyone will get all of these symptoms. Some children may also have rash appear on the knees, elbows, buttocks or genital area. Some people, especially adults, may show no symptoms at all, but they can still pass the virus to others.

## Causes

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is caused by viruses that belong to the [Enterovirus](#) genus (group), including polioviruses, coxsackie viruses, echoviruses, and enteroviruses.

Coxsackie virus A16 is the most common cause of hand, foot, and mouth disease in the United States, but other coxsackie viruses can also cause the illness.

## Transmission

The viruses that cause hand, foot, and mouth disease can be found in an infected person's:

- nose and throat secretions (such as saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus),
- blister fluid, and
- feces (stool).

An infected person may spread the viruses that cause hand, foot, and mouth disease to another person through:

- close personal contact,
- the air (through coughing or sneezing),

- contact with feces,
- contact with contaminated objects and surfaces.

Generally, a person with hand, foot, and mouth disease is most contagious during the first week of illness. People can sometimes be contagious for days or weeks after symptoms go away. Some people, especially adults, may not develop any symptoms, but they can still spread the virus to others. This is why people should always try to maintain **good hygiene (e.g. handwashing) so they can minimize their chance of spreading or getting infections.**

## Prevention

There is no vaccine to protect against the viruses that cause hand, foot, and mouth disease.

A person can lower their risk of being infected by

- Washing hands often with soap and water, especially after changing diapers and using the toilet. Visit [CDC's Clean Hands Save Lives!](#) for more information.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and soiled items, including toys.
- Avoiding close contact such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils or cups with people with hand, foot, and mouth disease.

If a person has mouth sores, it might be painful to swallow. However, it is important for people with hand, foot, and mouth disease to drink enough liquids to prevent dehydration (loss of body fluids). If a person cannot swallow enough liquids, they may need to receive them through an IV in their vein.

## Treatment

There is no specific treatment for hand, foot, and mouth disease. However, some things can be done to relieve symptoms, such as

- Taking over-the-counter medications to relieve pain and fever (Caution: Aspirin should not be given to children.)
- Using mouthwashes or sprays that numb mouth pain

People who are concerned about their symptoms should contact their health care provider.

## Returning to school:

Always talk with your healthcare provider if you are not sure when you should return to work or school. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2013), ***students may return to school when other exclusion criteria such as fever and behavior changes are resolved.***

If a child does not feel well enough to participate due to discomfort from sores in mouth or other areas your health care provider should be contacted for recommendations on how best to control the discomfort.

Excluding children from the group setting does not reduce disease transmission as some children may shed the virus even when not recognizably ill and the virus may be shed for weeks. Good cough and sneeze etiquette as well as good hand hygiene is the best way to reduce transmission (Aronson, s & Schope, T, 2013, *Managing Infections Diseases in Child Care and Schools*)

**Links to more information**

**CDC on Coxsackie Virus**

**Coxsackie Virus**

**Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease**

**Why is handwashing so important?**

**Information on Dehydration**

