



Kapa'a Pediatrics, LLC

Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease

Hand-Foot-Mouth (HFM) Disease is caused by an enterovirus that causes fever, small ulcers in the mouth, small blisters or red spots on the hands, feet, and often thighs/diaper area. Herpangina is the name given to the disease if there are only mouth sores and no skin findings. The incubation period for this virus is about 3-6 days.

What to Expect:

Fever and sore throat often occur first. The sores in the throat are very painful and have a classic appearance of a little white circle surrounded by a red outline. There are often a few red dots on the top of the palate. Usually the sores are only in the back of the throat but they can be on the tongue and throughout the mouth. In the next couple of days rash can appear on the hands, feet, legs, or buttock areas. Some of the rash can blister. The rash on the palms and soles are usually red dots and do not blister. The rash and mouth sores last about 1 week. The main concern with HFM disease is dehydration if the child refuses to eat. If the cuticles of the fingers/toes are involved then the nails can also fall off as a complication, but they will grow back. There are many strains of the virus, so YES, your child can get it more than once!

Treatment: Since it is caused by a virus there is only symptomatic care.

1. MOUTH PAIN: Cold liquids like juice, coconut water, sports drinks, and smoothies will help with hydration. If your child is not eating solid food then something other than only water needs to be given to replace electrolytes.
2. Pain and Fever: Tylenol and/or Ibuprofen PRN - see Medication Dosing Handout
3. Benadryl can be used to help your child sleep at night.

Return to School:

HFM is very contagious. Most children get HFM disease by the time they are 6 years old. Your child may return to school 48 hours after the fever has gone away AND after all blisters have popped and scabbed over.

When to Call your Doctor:

- Fever lasts more than 3 days or fever higher than 105F
- Dehydration concerns. Child will not eat or drink. No urination in 12 hours, etc.
- Headache or change in mental status

*** Patient handouts created by Kapa'a Pediatrics are intended to give parents the most common and pertinent facts about a certain issue. If there is ever any concern that your child was given an incorrect diagnosis or is not following the usual expected course for an illness please call us to speak with a physician. (808) 634-8011 ***