

# Hand, foot & mouth

## A common mild illness

This is a disease caused by a group of viruses that usually affect young children. It causes blisters on the hands and feet, and mouth ulcers inside the cheeks and on the tongue. Those affected may have a sore throat and develop a high temperature. These symptoms last for 7 to 10 days. It is generally a mild infection and those affected will make a complete recovery.

The virus is spread by coughs and sneezes, and is also found in the faeces (poo) of infected children. Some children infected with the virus do not have symptoms but can still pass it to others.

There is no specific treatment for hand, foot and mouth disease - it is usually a mild and self-limiting illness. If a child feels unwell paracetamol may be helpful (do not use aspirin in children under 16 years of age). Antibiotics and creams or ointments for the blisters are not effective. Children recover just as quickly without them.

## Health visitor says

Children should avoid contact with pregnant women but only need to be kept off school if they are unwell.

To avoid transmitting infection, scrupulous attention must always be paid to handwashing after using the toilet.

Whilst a person has the blisters present they should avoid sharing towels and face cloths/flannels with other people.

Soiled clothes, bedding and towels should be washed separately on the 'hot cycle' of the washing machine.

### 1

Your child has blisters on the hands and feet, and mouth ulcers inside the cheeks and on the tongue.

### 2

There is no specific treatment. Antibiotics and creams or ointments are not effective.

### 3

Generally it is a mild infection and those affected will make a complete recovery.

If you are still worried, contact your health visitor or doctor.