

Prevent Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is **very contagious**.

You can help prevent catching or spreading hand, foot, and mouth disease by following simple steps.

1. Wash your hands

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Always wash your hands:

- After changing diapers
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick



Help children wash their hands. Teach them how to wash their hands and make sure they wash them often.

2. Clean and disinfect

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared items, including toys and doorknobs.



3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth

You can get infected with hand, foot, and mouth disease if you have the virus on your hands and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. To lessen your chance of getting sick, don't touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



4. Avoid close contact with sick people

Avoid touching someone who has hand, foot, and mouth disease, such as hugging or kissing them.



If your child is sick:

Because HFMD is normally mild, children can continue to go to childcare and schools as long as: they have no fever, they have no uncontrolled drooling with mouth sores, and they feel well enough to participate in classroom activities. Talk with your child's healthcare provider if you are still not sure when it is okay for them to return. In some cases, the local health department may require children with HFMD to stay home to control an outbreak.

There is no vaccine in the United States to protect against the viruses that cause hand, foot, and mouth disease. Researchers are working to develop vaccines to help prevent hand, foot, and mouth disease in the future.

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)