



Hand Foot and Mouth Disease Activity and Resources

Date: October 20, 2025

Public Health Message Type: ☐ Alert ☐ Advisory ☐ Update ☒ Information

Intended Audience: ☐ All public health partners ☐ Healthcare providers ☐ Infection preventionists
☒ Local health departments ☒ Schools/childcare centers ☐ ACOs
☐ Animal health professionals ☐ Animal health professionals
☐ Other:

Key Points or Updates:

- The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) reminds schools that hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD), often increases during this time of year. Although this illness can occur year-round, outbreaks are most common in the summer and early fall. The NJDOH has received reports of HFMD outbreaks from childcare/early care and education programs, K-12 schools including sports teams, since the start of the school year.
- HFMD is a common viral illness, usually affecting infants and young children, characterized by a rash and blisters on the hands, feet, and in or around the mouth. It's typically mild and self-limiting, with most people recovering within 7 to 10 days. Adult cases are not unusual and may be more severe. Laboratory testing is available, but most infections are diagnosed based on clinical presentation.
- HFMD is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing or contact with blister fluid or feces (poop/stool) of an infected person. A person with HFMD is most contagious in the first week of illness although the virus may be shed for weeks to months.
- While there is no specific treatment for HFMD, fever and pain can be managed with over-the-counter fever reducers and pain relievers. It is important for people with HFMD to drink enough fluids to prevent dehydration (loss of body fluids).

Information for Schools, Childcare, ECE Programs:

- HFMD can spread quickly at childcare/ECE programs and schools. To help prevent transmission of HFMD within your facility:
 - **Wash hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers, using the toilet, and coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
 - **Teach and help children wash their hands** often and keep blisters clean.
 - **Avoid touching your face** with unwashed hands, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched surfaces and shared items (e.g., toys, doorknobs, tables). Routine disinfection procedures are effective for

HFMD. For more information on cleaning and disinfecting see the ***NJDOH General Guidelines for the Control of Outbreaks in Schools and Daycare Settings*** found on the [NJDOH School Health](#) page.

- **Avoid close contact** such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils or cups with people who have HFMD.
- Single cases of HFMD are not reportable in New Jersey and during summer/fall, sporadic cases are expected. However, facilities must immediately report suspect outbreaks of HFMD, defined as an occurrence of disease greater than would otherwise be expected at a particular time and place, to the [local health department](#) (LHD) where the facility is located.
- Facilities should monitor illness reports in attendees and staff and notify their LHD if an increase in cases could signify an outbreak is occurring. A directory of local health departments can be found at <http://localhealth.nj.gov>
- Facilities should exclude attendees with HFMD until the following criteria has been met:
 - Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication;
 - Excessive drooling from mouth sores has stopped;
 - Able to participate comfortably in activities; and
 - Other exclusion criteria, if any, has been met.

Contact Information: School Health Team CDSSchoolHealth@doh.nj.gov

References and Resources:

[NJDOH School Health](#)

[NJDOH Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease](#)

[CDC About Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease](#)