

This leaflet gives general advice. For further information please ask either the nursing or medical staff who are providing your care and treatment or contact the Infection Control Team on 01386 502552.

If you would like this leaflet in a different language, larger print size, in audio, Braille or any other format please contact the

PALS team by phone on

☎ 01905 760020;

by letter ✉ Communications,  
Worcestershire Health and Care Trust,  
Isaac Maddox House, Worcester

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Worcestershire  
Health and Care  
NHS Trust



## HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH

*What is it?*

*Your questions answered*

**An Information Leaflet for  
Patients and Staff**

This disease is **NOT** related to the foot and mouth disease that affects animals

### WHAT IS IT?

Hand foot and mouth disease is an infection that is usually caused by a virus called the coxsackie A virus. Some cases are caused by coxsackie B virus and enterovirus 71. This usually affects children under 10, although older children and adults are sometimes affected.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The illness often starts with feeling unwell for a day or so and may include a high temperature (fever). After this a sore throat commonly occurs, followed by small spots inside the mouth that soon progress into small mouth ulcers. A day or so later small blister like spots usually appear on the hands and feet and sometimes on buttocks, legs and genitals, though rarely on other parts of the body. Older children and adults tend to develop a milder form of the illness.

### IS IT DANGEROUS?

Usually not. The fever and spots usually clear within a few days. The mouth ulcers can be painful and last for up to a week. In a very small number of cases the virus can affect muscles or the brain and cause serious inflammation but this is very rare.

### IS HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE INFECTIOUS?

Yes. It takes 3-6 days to develop symptoms after being infected from another person. Sometimes small outbreaks occur in nurseries and schools. It is infectious before the spots and mouth ulcers appear. Children can still be mildly infectious for several weeks longer as the virus may be passed out with the faeces (stools) for several weeks after the symptoms have gone.

### HOW SOON CAN THE PERSON RETURN TO WORK/SCHOOL/CARE SETTING?

It is impractical to exclude children from school or nursery once they feel well again. It is, however, important to maintain good hygiene (in particular, hand washing after going to the toilet) and thorough cleaning of the environment to reduce the chance of passing on the virus.

### IS THERE ANY TREATMENT?

Medication can be given to reduce temperature or ease a sore mouth. Plenty of drinks should be given. Cool, sloppy foods such as yoghurt or ice cream may be preferred for a day or so if the mouth is sore. Ice lollies may help to ease a sore mouth and are also a way of giving a drink.

