

# Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease

Hand, foot and mouth disease is spread by coughing or sneezing, or by contact with mucus, saliva, blisters or the bowel movements of an infected person.

Children are contagious ('catching') for around 7–10 days.

Keep your child home from school until blisters have dried. If blisters are able to be covered and the child is feeling well, they will not need to be excluded.

Frequent hand washing helps decrease the chance of becoming infected.

Staying away from others who have the disease and not sharing toys during the infection also helps prevent the disease.

The only medicine recommended for hand, foot and mouth disease is paracetamol.

Most blisters disappear without causing problems. In the mouth, however, some may form shallow, painful sores that look similar to cold sores. If your child's mouth is sore, don't give them sour, salty or spicy foods.

Make sure they drink plenty of liquids to avoid getting dehydrated.

## Slapped Cheek

As slapped cheek is infectious before it is diagnosed, keeping your child home from preschool or school will not prevent the spread of the disease, but it is recommended they stay home if feeling unwell.

If you are exposed to slapped cheek, try to stop it spreading by making sure you and your children:

- wash your hands frequently
- cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- do not share food, eating utensils and drink bottles.

Also try to avoid contact with pregnant women and people who have low immunity to disease.

There is no specific treatment for slapped cheek, but to keep your child comfortable you can:

- let them have plenty of rest
- give paracetamol to relieve fever
- use cold cloths to relieve discomfort of hot cheeks
- make sure they drink plenty of water

**Call Healthline 0800 611 116 if you are unsure what you should do.**