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**SUBJECT:** Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie Virus)  
**Date issued:** November 1, 2017 **Pages: 2**  
**To:** Parents, Staff  
**From:** Control of Infectious Diseases Team, Public Health

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*Two physician diagnosed cases of hand, foot, and mouth disease have been reported at East Garafraxa Public School.*

### **What is hand, foot, and mouth disease?**

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a common disease in young children. It is caused by a virus (Coxsackie virus). This virus is **not** related to the virus that causes hoof-and-mouth disease in animals. The disease often breaks out within a community in the summer and fall.

### **What are the signs and symptoms of the disease?**

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is usually very mild and symptoms go away with no problems. A child may have the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Lack of appetite or energy
- Small, painful blisters in the mouth
- A skin rash of red spots, often topped by small blisters, may appear on the palms and soles, between fingers and toes, and occasionally on the buttocks

### **How does hand, foot, and mouth disease spread?**

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is spread by breathing in droplets that are sprayed into the air when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or talks. It can be spread by direct contact with discharge from an infected person's nose and throat, or through feces (stool).

### **How long is a person contagious?**

A person with hand, foot, and mouth disease is contagious (able to make others sick) during the first week of the illness. The virus can stay in the stool and spread to others for several months after the blisters and sores have healed. Most cases go away in 7 to 10 days.

## **What can parents do?**

There is no vaccine to prevent the disease, and because the disease is caused by a virus, antibiotic drugs don't work in treating it. You can:

- Watch your child for signs and symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease. If your child has symptoms, call your doctor.
- Give your child cool drinks, popsicles, and ice cream.
- Do not give your child spicy or acidic foods and drinks such as salsa or orange juice. These foods can make mouth sores more painful.

## **What are some ways to prevent other types of illness?**

- Good hand washing is the best way to stop the spread of disease. Clean your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol handrub. This is most important before you prepare and eat food, and after you cough, sneeze, wipe a nose, or use the washroom. Be aware that the virus can live for a long time in feces.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Do not share food, drinks, toothbrushes, musical instruments with mouthpieces, or eating utensils. Sports teams should not share water bottles or mouthguards
- If you have symptoms of illness avoid direct saliva contact with others (e.g., kissing).

## **When can my child return to school or child care?**

Children with hand, foot, and mouth disease may go to school or child care if they feel well enough to take part in activities.

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### **For more information, refer to contact or website:**

**Call:** Control of Infectious Diseases Reporting Line

**Contact:** 519-822-2715 or 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4752 / [www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca](http://www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca)