

FACT SHEET

# HAND, FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE

(Herpangina; Coxsackievirus A-16)

<b><i>What is Herpangina?</i></b>	Herpangina (also called hand, foot & mouth disease) is an infection caused by an enterovirus. It occurs most often in children under age 10, and is generally mild.
<b><i>How is it spread?</i></b>	It is spread from person-to-person by direct contact with nose and throat aerosol droplets/discharges or feces of infected persons. Herpangina is most common in the summer and fall.
<b><i>What is the incubation period?</i></b>	3-6 days after exposure.
<b><i>What are the early signs?</i></b>	Early signs include a sudden fever, sore throat, cough, and headache. 1-2 days after the fever, small blisters or ulcer-like sores in the mouth/throat and/or a rash on the hands/feet may appear.
<b><i>What about people, who come in contact with the ill person?</i></b>	Child should be excluded from school only if signs of the disease appear. Parents should check with their family physician to rule out other serious rash illnesses.
<b><i>How long is the person contagious?</i></b>	Herpangina is contagious during the active stage of the illness and perhaps longer (the virus may persist in stool for several weeks). Recovery is usually 7-10 days.
<b><i>When is it OK to return to school?</i></b>	It is OK to return to school when the child no longer has a fever and feels well enough to participate in class.
<b><i>Other Important Information</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the virus may remain in your stool for several weeks, encourage children to wash hands well after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food.</li> <li>• Thoroughly clean surfaces or items that come in contact with drool, or fluid from blisters/rash.</li> <li>• Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and dispose of used tissues in garbage.</li> <li>• The school is required to send children home that are ill and may be at risk to spread the disease.</li> </ul>

*This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Parents should contact their healthcare provider if they have concerns regarding their child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact a Kalamazoo County nurse at 373-5264 or 373-5267.*

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