

Hand, foot, and mouth disease

This information is based on the national guidance: [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#).

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a common childhood illness, it is caused by a virus. Please note hand, foot and mouth disease is different to foot and mouth disease found in animals.

Symptoms:

- High temperature
- Sore throat
- Reduced appetite (not feeling hungry)
- Generally feeling unwell

May be followed one or two days later by:

- Rash with blisters on hands, feet, cheeks, gums, and sides of the tongue. Please note rashes may look different depending on skin tone - visit [NHS online](#) for more information.

Cases can also be asymptomatic.

Rare more severe symptoms that require medical attention include high temperature, headache, stiff neck and backpain.

When should children with symptoms of hand, foot and mouth stop coming to school, nursery, or college?

Children should stay at home if they do not feel well enough to attend the education setting, and can return when they are feeling better, even if their blisters have not healed.

What should we do in the education setting?

Please contact your UKHSA team on 0344 2254 524, if there are a large number of children effected by hand, foot and mouth disease.

Pregnant staff should be advised to avoid children with rashes and seek advice from their GP or midwife if concerned. There is a low risk from having a high temperature in pregnancy, and in later weeks a risk of the baby being born with a mild form of the infection.

Encourage children and staff to wash their hands. Children and staff should use soap and water or alcohol hand gel regularly, but especially before eating or handling food, after using the toilet, and after coughing or sneezing.

Staff involved in nappy changing or toileting should wash their hands carefully and be particularly cautious for several weeks after a child has been unwell, as the virus can still be present.

Appropriate PPE for these tasks should be correctly worn.

Encourage children to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue (or sleeve) when sneezing or coughing; dispose of the tissue, and then wash their hands.



Maintain a thorough cleaning regime, especially in kitchens, bathrooms, and areas where there are groups of children with symptoms. Objects such as light switches and handrails that are touched frequently throughout the day should be cleaned more regularly.

Equipment such as dishwashers and washing machines should be appropriately maintained to ensure they remain operational.

Teaching resources:

Early years - [hand and respiratory hygiene](#)

KS1 - [hand and respiratory hygiene](#)

KS2 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

KS3 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

KS4 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

