

Dear Parents/Guardians:

You are receiving this letter because one or more students in your child's school have been diagnosed with hand, foot and mouth disease. Hand, foot, and mouth diseases is a common viral illness that usually affects infants and children younger than 5 years old. However, it can sometimes occur in older children and adults.

Symptoms:

It usually starts with a fever, reduced appetite, sore throat, and a general feeling of being unwell. One or two days after the fever starts, painful sores can develop in the mouth. They usually begin as small red spots, often in the back of the mouth, that blister and can become painful. A skin rash on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet may also develop over one or two days as flat, red spots, sometimes with blisters. It may also appear on the knees, elbows, buttocks or genital area. Some people, especially young children, may get dehydrated if they are not able to swallow enough liquids because of painful mouth sores. You should seek medical care in these cases. Generally, a person with hand, foot and mouth disease is most contagious during the first week of illness.

Transmission:

You can get exposed to the viruses that cause hand, foot, and mouth disease through close personal contact, such as hugging an infected person; the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes; contact with feces, such as changing diapers of an infected person, then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth before washing your hands; or contact with contaminated objects and surfaces, like touching a doorknob that has viruses on it, then touching your eyes, mouth, or nose before washing your hands.

Action Steps:

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers and using the toilet. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and soiled items, including toys. Avoid close contact such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils or cups with people with hand, foot, and mouth disease.

If you have any questions, please call Knox Public Health at 740-392-2200 ext. 2238.

