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CHILDREN'S RASH ILLNESSES INCREASING

An increase in childhood rash disease, **Hand Foot &Mouth Disease (HFMD)** has been observed on Guam recently.

Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease is a usually **mild but highly contagious viral infection** common in young children under 10. It is often spread in daycares.

Signs and Symptoms

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Feeling unwell
- Painful sores on the tongue, gums and inside of the cheeks
- Red rash on hands, feet or butts (may be itchy, may have blisters)
- Irritability in infants and toddlers
- Loss of appetite

**Although your child is most contagious during the first week of the illness, the virus can remain in the body for weeks after the signs and symptoms are gone

There is no vaccine to protect against the viruses that cause Fifth disease or HFMD but you and your children can lower your risk of becoming sick (or of spreading the infection if already sick) by observing the following preventive measures:

1. Always clean hands with soap and water after using the toilet or handling diapers and other stool-soiled materials.

2. Do not share towels or wash cloths, especially at nurseries and other facilities for infants.

3. Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and oral discharges properly.

4. Clean shared children's toys and other objects thoroughly and frequently with diluted household bleach (approximately 1 part Clorox to 10 parts water). Allow to set for a few

minutes and then rinse with clean water or wipe dry with a clean cloth. Regular disinfectants can also be used instead of Clorox.

5. Avoid taking children to overcrowded places if they are sick; avoid exposing young children to crowds, especially when childhood diseases are prevalent in the community .

6. Avoid close contact such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils or cups with people who may be sick or have been exposed to sick children.

7. Children who are ill should be kept out of school or day care centers until their fever and rash have subsided and any vesicles have dried and become crusted.

There are no specific treatments for these diseases. However, some things can be done to relieve symptoms, such as:

- Taking over-the-counter medications to relieve pain and fever (Caution: aspirin should not be given to children.)
- Using mouthwashes or sprays that numb mouth pain. If a person has mouth sores, it may be painful to swallow. However, drinking liquids to stay hydrated is important. If they cannot swallow enough liquids, they may become dehydrated and require hospitalization.

If symptoms persist for more than a few days or become worse, parents should contact their health care provider.

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Hand-Foot and Mouth Disease

Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease is a usually mild but highly contagious viral infection common in young children under 10. It is often spread in daycares. Although your child is most contagious during the first week of the illness, the virus can remain in the body for weeks after the signs and symptoms are gone. That means your child still can infect others, so do not have your sick child attend school or daycare until cleared by the doctor.

Signs and Symptoms

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Feeling unwell
- Painful sores on the tongue, gums and inside of the cheeks
- Red rash on hands, feet or butt (may be itchy, may have blisters)
- Irritability in infants and toddlers
- Loss of appetite

Prevention

- Wash hands frequently
- Disinfect common areas, toys and pacifiers
- Practice good hygiene (Tell children not to put their fingers, hands or any other objects in their mouths)
- Stay home if you or your child is sick

When to see a doctor

Symptoms usually clear up within 7-10 days. Contact your doctor, however, if mouth sores or a sore throat keep your child from drinking fluids. Contact your doctor also if after a few days, your child's signs and symptoms worsen.