HASTINGS PRINCE EDWARD
Public Health

What is it?
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is a mild illness caused by the coxsackie virus. It usually occurs in children under 10 years of age but adult cases are not unusual. It occurs in summer and early fall.

What are the symptoms?
Symptoms occur 3-5 days after contact with the virus. There is sudden onset with fever, sore throat and small greyish-like sores in the mouth. Similar sores may appear on the hands, feet and occasionally in the diaper area. The sores may last from 4-6 days.

When is it contagious?
It is contagious when the sores first appear and during the course of illness. Virus may remain in bowel movements for several weeks.

How is it spread?
It is spread by direct contact with nose and throat secretions, such as when sneezing, coughing, kissing, and sharing dishes. It is also spread by contact with the bowel movements of infected people, i.e. when diapering.

How can it be prevented?
Good personal hygiene is very important. Wash hands thoroughly:
- before eating or preparing food,
- after going to the toilet,
- after handling items soiled with bowel movements or saliva, e.g. Kleenex, diapers, clothing.

Teach children to cover their mouth when they sneeze and cough.
Wash dishes and cutlery in hot soapy water to prevent spread of infection.

Should children be kept home?
Children may return to school or day nursery if they are well enough to take part in routine activities. Sick children should be kept home.

Other Questions?
Talk to your health care provider or call our Communicable Disease Program at 613-966-5500 x349. Toll Free 1-800-267-2803 | TTY Dial 711 (1-800-267-6511) | www.hpepublichealth.ca

Reference
- Heymann, D.L. (2008). *Control of Communicable Disease Manual* (19th Ed). Washington, DC: American Public Health Association

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