

Health Alert: Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease

The KZN Department of Health has announced an outbreak of **Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease (HFMD)** in certain districts in the province with some schools affected by the outbreak.

What is Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease?

It is an infectious disease. It causes blisters / sores / rash in and around the mouth, hands, and other parts of the body. Usually affects infants and children under the age of 10 but adults can get infected too.

Symptoms

Sore throat, tiredness, loss of appetite, fever and blisters / sores

Prognosis and duration

Symptoms appear at least 3-6 days after the infection. Most people get better on their own within 7-14 days.

Transmission

Direct contact – with infected saliva, nasal secretions, or blisters.
Droplets – from coughing or sneezing spreads the virus in the air.
Contaminated surfaces & objects – shared toys, stationery, and utensils.
Contact with contaminated faeces – poor hand hygiene after using the toilet or changing diapers.

Prevention

Wash hands frequently especially after touching common surfaces.
Avoid close contact with people who have **Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease**.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for **Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease**, only symptoms are treated.
Use over the counter remedies for sore throat and blisters.
Stay hydrated (drink water) at least 2 liters in 24 hours for adults.

When to seek medical care

Immediately if it's a child under 6 months with sores in the throat and mouth and symptoms make it painful to drink fluids.
If you have weakened immunity.
If symptoms are severe and or do not improve after 10 days.

You are advised not to panic but exercise caution and take precautionary measures to prevent getting infected.



HoD Campus Health Services
Date: 19 February 2025