



July 25, 2014

Dear Group Child Care and School-Based Directors,

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has received multiple reports of cases or clusters of Hand, Foot and Mouth disease, some of which have been confirmed to be caused by Coxsackie viruses, over the past few weeks. We are writing now to provide information on this illness and on how to minimize its spread in child care settings.

Hand, Foot and Mouth disease is a common illness in young children, and is usually caused by a virus, often a Coxsackie virus. It is most often a mild disease but can occasionally cause more serious illness. There is no treatment for Hand, Foot and Mouth disease and it usually resolves spontaneously. Antibiotics are not necessary. It is highly contagious and is spread from person to person through contact with mouth, nose or throat secretions (i.e. from coughing or sneezing) or contact with feces. It can also be spread through close personal contact, or contact with contaminated objects or surfaces such as toys, doorknobs, diapers, tissues, or other surfaces in child care settings. Children with suspected Hand, Foot and Mouth disease should be excluded from child care until all blisters have dried and fever is resolved.

The symptoms of Hand, Foot and Mouth disease include:

- Rash (pink bumps or spots which can sometimes become blisters), especially involving the palms, soles but also can include the knees, elbows, buttocks or genital area
- Painful sores in the mouth and/or throat that may cause drooling
- Fever
- Poor appetite and not feeling well
- Sometimes children refuse to eat or drink and this can lead to dehydration.

The best ways to prevent the spread of Hand, Foot and Mouth disease in child care settings are to:

- Make sure that children who are ill do not attend child care.
- Practice good hand hygiene. Staff should wash hands with soap and water frequently, but especially after changing diapers and before and after feeding children. Children should be assisted with hand washing.
- Clean surfaces, such as toys and desks, frequently with soap, water and bleach.

For more information, please go to these websites at:

CDC Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease Page
<http://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/>

NYC DOHMH Hand, Foot and Mouth Fact Sheet
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/diseases/cdc/x.shtml>

Feel free to visit the Bureau of Child Care's website at www.nyc.gov/health/childcare for the contact information of our Borough offices, with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Bureau of Child Care