

Keep germs away!



Protect your child from contagious diseases like influenza and Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease



Influenza and Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) are infectious illnesses. They can lead to complications if they are not properly treated, and young children are most at risk. Find out how you can fight these infections effectively.

Influenza

You probably know it as the “flu”. This is a contagious illness that can affect anyone.

How it spreads

The infection is spread through droplets in the air when someone with the flu coughs, sneezes or speaks. It can be transmitted indirectly when a person touches a contaminated surface, for example, a lift button or a door knob, and uses the same hand to touch his mouth or his nose.



Does my child have the flu?

Flu attacks the respiratory tract, causing inflammation in the nose, throat and lungs. Look out for symptoms such as a high fever, sore throat, coughing, headache, aches in the body and a stuffy nose. Your child may also suffer from sneezing fits, nasal

discharge, appetite loss, fatigue, general weakness, chills, and stomach discomfort.

Complications

Left untreated, influenza can lead to complications such as pneumonia, bronchitis, sinusitis, ear infection and meningitis (inflammation of the lining that covers the brain).

“The infection is spread through droplets in the air when someone with the flu coughs, sneezes or speaks.”





Flu fighters

Teach your child to fight flu with these tips.

1. Keep hands clean

Your child's hands tend to get dirty as he explores his environment, thus his hands are exposed to germs. Wash his hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water. Alcohol sanitisers can be used when there is no soap and water.

Wash your child's hands

- Before and after meals.
- Before handling food.
- After using the toilet.
- After blowing his nose.
- After touching common surfaces like tabletops, doorknobs, handrails, etc.

2. Cover up

Cover your child's nose and mouth with tissue when he coughs or sneezes. Each time he coughs or sneezes, germs are spread into the air. If the water droplets from his cough or sneeze land on surfaces that are touched by others, this can cause them to fall sick.

3. Wear a mask to protect others

If your child has the flu, please let him wear a mask to prevent other people from being exposed to the germs. Wash his hands before putting on the mask and after disposing it. His mask should be changed every eight hours, or when it becomes moist.



4. Take your child's temperature

Your child's body temperature will increase when it is trying to fight an infection. If his body temperature hits 38°C or more, he could have the flu. And if he experiences other flu symptoms such as a sore throat, runny nose, cough, muscle aches and tiredness, please see a doctor. Make sure he puts on a mask before he leaves the house.





5. Live healthily

Once your child is well, practise good personal hygiene and be socially responsible.

This includes covering his nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, and using a serving spoon when sharing food from a common plate.

Tips for healthier living and building immunity for your child:

- Eat a balanced diet, with fruits and vegetables.



- Undertake 180 minutes of physical activity daily spread out over the course of a day.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- For parents, do not smoke. If you do, quit.

Keep your child at home if he is ill. Avoid crowded places such as schools, child care centres, hospitals and malls.



Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

HFMD is commonly caused by virus. It is infectious and can happen to anyone, but young children, especially those aged 5 years and below, are most susceptible. HFMD is usually mild, but it can lead to complications and even death.

How it spreads

HFMD spreads by direct contact with fluid from skin lesions, nose and throat secretions, or stools of an infected person. It can also spread by indirect contact with objects used by infected persons. There are cases where people who have HFMD do not show any symptoms, but they can still spread the disease as the virus is still active.

Does my child have HFMD?

A child with HFMD usually presents with the following symptoms:

- Fever for 2-3 days
- Sore throat and runny nose
- Mouth ulcers
- Rash (flat or raised red spots, some with blisters) on the hands (especially the palms), feet and occasionally on the buttocks
- Lack of appetite
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Tiredness and weakness

Complications

In most cases, HFMD is mild. However, please bring your child to the Emergency Department of the nearest hospital immediately should he present with the following signs and symptoms:

- Disorientation, drowsiness and/or irritability
- Severe headache, giddiness or neck stiffness

- Breathlessness or turning blue
- Dehydration — this can happen due to continuous vomiting, diarrhoea or poor fluid intake as a result of painful mouth ulcers



What should I do if my child has HFMD?

- Bring him to your family doctor or nearest polyclinic.
- Encourage him to drink plenty of fluids.
- Feed him with a soft diet, such as porridge, mashed potatoes or pureed fruits.
- Give him medication prescribed by the doctor.
- Keep him away from school, the child care centre, and public places such as shopping malls.
- Inform his school or child care centre. They can monitor the other children and take precautions to prevent the spread of HFMD.
- Keep his toys, books, eating utensils, towels and clothes separate from others.
- Keep him at home until he has fully recovered, even though the medical certificate (MC) given by the doctor has expired.
- Look out for signs and symptoms in other family members, both children and adults. Ensure his siblings are well before sending them to school or the child care centre.

Children who are sick should be resting at home to help them recover faster and reduce the risk of complications.


**Parent-
Child
Activities**

Infection Invaders

Bond with your child as you both learn how to fight viruses and stay healthy

Sing your hand clean!

This fun “washy washy clean” song will teach your child the right way to get his hands squeaky clean. You can also download the song at www.hpb.gov.sg/studenthealth

Washy Washy Clean

(sing to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It”)

Chorus/Intro

It’s fun to wash your hands
And I know you understand
So we washy washy clean, scrub scrub

Verse

We start with washing palm to palm
Between each finger, let us rub
Now the back of the hands, it’s such a simple plan
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

Clean the base of the thumbs one by one
Then the back of the fingers, this is fun!
Don’t forget your fingernails, it’s about details
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

Now move on to the wrists, let us rub
I think we’re nearly done, so now what
Just rinse the soap away, dry our hands and we’re ok
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

Chorus

So we washy washy clean, scrub scrub
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub
It’s fun to wash your hands and I know you’ll understand
We washy washy clean, scrub scrub

