



If you have young children, pay attention to What's Going Around. A virus you may have never even heard of, is having a bit of an upswing lately in our area.

Centra Care physicians have diagnosed Hand Food and Mouth Disease (HFMD) more frequently than usual this week. This highly contagious infection is most commonly caused by the Coxsackie Virus.

LEARN MORE:

HFMD is a viral illness that is most commonly diagnosed in children under the age of 5 who generally haven't been exposed to the virus and developed immunity; however, adults can also get the virus. It is characterized by painful mouth ulcers and/or a skin rash, and is accompanied by fever, body aches, sore throat and fatigue.

Because there is no cure, the illness must run its course, about 7 – 10 days. The biggest risk of HFMD is dehydration in young children who won't drink due to throat pain. Symptoms can be treated with over-the-counter pain relievers and throat-numbing sprays. Parents need to be sure children are getting plenty of fluids.

What to look for:

- The disease usually begins with a fever, poor appetite, an overall unwell feeling, and often a sore throat.
- One or 2 days after fever onset, painful sores usually develop in the mouth. They begin as small red spots that blister and then often become ulcers. The sores are usually located on the tongue, gums and inside of the cheeks.
- A non-itchy skin rash develops over 1–2 days. The rash has flat or raised red spots, sometimes with blisters. The rash is usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet but it may also appear on the buttocks and/or genitalia.
- A person with HFMD may have only the rash or only the mouth sores.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Typically once someone has had the HFMD they build up immunity, but there are several forms of the virus so it is possible to get it again.

Frequent hand washing is essential to avoid the illness, especially after changing diapers and after going to the bathroom. Also, avoid close contact with someone that has HFMD, no kissing, hugging, or sharing utensils and drinks.

If you think you or one of your children may have HFMD, it's a good idea to seek medical care to confirm the disease. There are several illnesses that can look like HFMD: strep throat, scarlet fever, cold sores and mono - which are treatable.

HFMD is often confused with foot-and-mouth (also called hoof-and-mouth) disease, a

disease of cattle, sheep, and swine; however, the two diseases are not related—different viruses cause them. Humans do not get the animal disease, and animals do not get the human disease.

At Centra Care, It's All About You. Every location offers convenient, \$25 flu shots, as well as treats adult and pediatric patients without an appointment or you can make a No Wait Reservation at centracare.org. You can also [download](#) the Centra Care smartphone app to book your reservation while on the go.

If you or someone in your family needs a vaccination or suffers from an illness, allergy or injury that needs medical attention, Centra Care has 22 locations, serving you 7-days a week.

To learn more about What's Going Around in our community, listen for Centra Care community health alerts every Tuesday morning between 8:00am and 8:30am on ZRadio/88.3 FM. For additional health information, visit CentraCare.org.