

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

There have recently been a couple of diagnosed cases of Hand Foot and Mouth disease in Kununurra, including some children of school age.

Below is information regarding Hand Foot and Mouth disease that may be beneficial.

### **What is hand, foot and mouth disease?**

Hand foot and mouth disease (HFMD) is a mild viral infection caused by different human viruses (eg Coxsackie A, Enterovirus and Echovirus). HFMD is not the same Foot and Mouth Disease of cattle.

### **How is it spread?**

HFMD infection is spread from person to person by direct contact with nose and throat discharges, fluid from the blisters, or faeces from infected persons.

### **Incubation and infectious period**

Incubation period is about 3-5 days.

The infectious period remains while there is fluid in the blisters, and in the faeces for several weeks after onset of illness.

### **Signs and symptoms**

HFMD usually begins with a mild fever, runny nose followed by a sore throat; and the appearance of a blister like rash on the mouth, hands and feet which gradually become ulcerated. Less commonly, these ulcers appear in the nappy area.

### **What are the complications?**

Complications are rare, but infection can sometimes cause viral meningitis. This condition causes fever, headache, neck stiffness, and may require hospitalization for a few days.

### **What is the treatment?**

No specific treatment is required. However, treatment may be required to relieve symptoms.

### **How do I reduce the risks of getting Hand foot and mouth disease?**

There is no vaccine for this infection. The following action is recommended:

- Children should be excluded from child care, schools and other group settings until blisters have dried.
- Hand washing with soap and water before preparing food, after changing nappies, or using the toilet.
- Clean surface areas of change mats with detergent and water, wipe dry and wipe over area with bleach (as per manufacturers instruction)

**More information can be obtained from your local GP or Community Health**

**Ruth Rummery-Hoath**  
**School Health Nurse**

**Kununurra Community Health**  
PO Box 634,  
Kununurra WA 6743  
Ph: (08) 9166 4330  
Fax: (08) 9168 2748