

Clinical Corner.

Most health care professionals will agree that most rashes are difficult to diagnose even when seen. HFMD may be one of the few exceptions! This viral disease causes, as the name suggests, small blisters on the hand, feet and mouth of mainly children under the age of 5 although it is seen in adults also.

### **Hand Foot and Mouth**

**What is it:** Viral infection that causes small painful mouth ulcers and/or tiny blisters on the hands and feet. Rarely the rash involves the arms, legs and face.

**Who it affects:** Mainly occurs in children age 6 months to 4 years.

**Cause:** Coxsackie viruses. Hand/Foot and Mouth can occur more than once because it can be caused by several viruses.

**Symptoms:** Fever, Sore throat, painful red blister-like sores in mouth, palms and soles and sometimes buttock, arms and legs.

**Incubation Period:** 3-6 days.

**Complications:** Complications are rare but can include dehydration (d/t painful swallowing), viral meningitis and encephalitis.

**Home Treatment:** cold fluids, popsicles, ice cream (age appropriate). Avoid acidic foods such as orange juice, salty or spicy foods.

**Did you know?** Sometimes the child's fingernails or toenails may fall off a few weeks after having HFMD- this is temporary and the nails will grow back without medical treatment.

Triage Nurses should always "look outside the box" when it comes to rashes. Don't assume all blistering rashes on the hands and feet are HFMD. A full triage of all symptoms including possible exposures is needed to accurately assess all patients.

Source/s:

[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)

