



Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie virus)

September 16, 2016

The current situation:

- As of September 16, 2016 the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has received reports of illness among high school students in five counties in New Jersey. Although some of the cases reported were due to Coxsackie virus, the virus that causes Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD), it is not clear if all of the reported illness is HFMD or if other viruses are involved.

HFMD is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing, or contact with blister fluid or feces (poop/stool) of an infected person. Single cases of HFMD or Coxsackie virus are not reportable in New Jersey.

This illness is commonly seen in the summer and early fall. It is not uncommon to see cases of HFMD this time of the year. A person with HFMD is most contagious the first week of the illness. Most individuals have typical symptoms of HFMD and recover without complications.

Symptoms of Coxsackie virus may include:

- Skin rash (flat or bumpy red spots) and may have blisters on the palms of the hands and/or soles of the feet. The rash may also appear on the knees or elbows.
- Fever (100° F or higher), sore throat, runny nose or poor appetite.

While there is no specific treatment for this illness, there are over-the-counter and prescription medicines that can help relieve symptoms.

To prevent the spread of HFMD, the NJDOH recommends:

- Increase handwashing with soap and water or alcohol hand rub (must contain 60% alcohol).
- Increase cleaning of commonly touched surfaces (e.g., desks, door knobs, keyboards, sports equipment, countertops).
- Avoid close contact such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils, water bottles or cups with infected people.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your inner elbow or a tissue, and throw the tissue away immediately.

Guidance for Local Health Departments and Schools

Schools should report to their local health department, cases of individuals who meet the current outbreak case definition: blister-like rash on the hands, feet, or mouth.

The blister-like rash may be accompanied by a fever (100° F or higher) and/or sore throat.

NJDOH does not recommend excluding individuals from school or sports who do not have symptoms (asymptomatic). To protect others from infection, exclusion from school or sports is recommended for ill individuals until they are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine. The decision about whether an individual is healthy enough to return to sports should be made by their health care provider.

For more information,

- NJDOH: http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/faq/hfmd_faq.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/index.html>