

*Timothy I. Ingram
Health Commissioner*

*250 William Howard Taft Road, 2nd Floor
Cincinnati, OH 45219*

*Phone 513.946.7800
Fax 513.946.7890*

hamiltoncountyhealth.org

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Dear Daycare Provider,

In recent weeks, cases of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) have been reported in daycare centers and schools in Hamilton County. The number of cases throughout Ohio and the U.S. has also increased. HFMD is not a reportable disease. However, an outbreak (two or more linked cases diagnosed by a medical practitioner) should be reported to your local health department. Outbreaks of HFMD typically occur during the summer and fall. Documented activity this year is earlier than expected.

HFMD is usually a mild illness caused by a virus. Young children are most frequently affected. Reports this year indicate a different type of virus may be currently circulating. This novel strain may cause more severe symptoms and may affect adults as well.

The virus is very contagious and is spread from person to person by direct contact with an infected person's respiratory/oral secretions or stool. It can also be spread through indirect contact with items soiled with these discharges or stool. The virus is present in the stool for up to one month after symptoms resolve.

Symptoms usually appear 3-7 days after exposure. Common signs and symptoms:

- Mild fever
- Poor appetite
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- A blister-like rash on the hands, feet, and in the mouth that usually develops 1 to 2 days after the initial symptoms

Daycare exclusion is recommended if children have fever, blisters in their mouths with drooling, weeping lesions, or are too ill to participate in daily activities. To prevent the spread of this illness, frequent and thorough hand washing along with cleaning and disinfecting of soiled objects is recommended. A bleach solution (1 tablespoon of bleach to 4 cups of water) may be used for disinfection.

Enclosed is a disease fact sheet to help answer your questions. If you have other questions about this condition, please feel free to call Hamilton County Public Health's Division of Epidemiology at 946-7849 or 946-7887, Monday through Friday between 8:00am and 4:00pm or Cincinnati Health Department's Communicable Disease Unit at 357-7462.

Thank you for your assistance in helping to keep the residents of Hamilton County healthy.

Ted Folger, MS, Director of Epidemiology
Hamilton County Public Health

Dr. Lawrence Holditch, Medical Director
Cincinnati Health Department