

Screening For
Hand, Foot
and
Mouth Disease

A Guide for Pre-schools



Screening

instructions and tips:

- 1** Have a designated check point for screening, preferably near the entrance to the school and before the children enter the classrooms.
- 2** Check each child individually, taking care not to allow the children to crowd around. To ensure orderliness, you may wish to ask the children to stand in a queue and check them one after another.
- 3** Ensure that you wash your hands with soap and water:
 - before starting and after completing the checks on all the children
 - after checking each child, especially where there is physical contact (e.g. when you are taking the child's temperature).Hand sanitisers should be used only if sink and water are not available. However, hands should be washed with soap and water if they are soiled.
- 4** Use a new thermometer sheath (for digital thermometers) or ear probe cover (for aural thermometers) for each child.
- 5** You may also wish to consider the following:
 - Start your checks early, well before the start of the session, as parents/caregivers bring their children to the pre-school. This may help to avoid overcrowding while screening and reduce school time spent on checking.
 - For the early-birds, check the children in the presence of the accompanying parent/caregiver (if they are able to wait), so that they can help to remove the shoes/socks. If there are suspicious signs, you are also able to inform them right away.
 - Set up a roster for staff to do screening. For example, for each class, you may wish to roster one staff to do the checking and another to help the children with shoes/socks and maintain orderliness. As you will know your pre-school best, please organise a roster that best suits your setting.

Specific checks for HFMD

1 Take the child's temperature using a digital or aural (ear) thermometer.

If the temperature is 37.9 deg C or greater when taken orally or 38.2 deg C or greater when taken via the ear thermometer, please isolate the child. Check the temperature 1/2 hour later to confirm that there is really a fever. Read the manufacturer's instructions on the proper use and range of normal temperature readings for each type of thermometer used. Please use temperature references recommended by the manufacturer if they differ from the temperatures recommended above.

2 Look for mouth ulcers.

Ask the child to open the mouth and say "Ah". Shine a torch light into the mouth and look for ulcers on the tongue, inner sides of the mouth and on the lips.





3 Look for blisters on the hands.

Ask the child to hold out the hands and show you his/her palms. Look for small pinkish/reddish bumps or tiny blisters with fluid. Then check for the same thing on the back of the hands.



4 Look for blisters on the feet.

Ask the child to remove his/her shoes and socks. Check the upper part of the feet first for bumps/blisters. Then, check the soles of the feet.



What to do if you suspect a child has HFMD

- 1** Isolate the child in the isolation room/sick bay away from the other children.
- 2** Contact the child's parent/caregiver.
- 3** Inform the parent/caregiver to take the child to the family doctor for a check-up, stressing that if the diagnosis is negative for HFMD, a letter from the doctor is necessary for the child to be re-admitted to the pre-school.
- 4** Once the child has left, disinfect any furniture or toys that you know the child may have been in contact with.
- 5** If the child is diagnosed with HFMD, please ask the parents/caregivers to keep the child at home and avoid contact with other children until fully recovered (when the child is well and the blisters have all dried up). The child should return when he/she is well, after the expiry of the MC given by the family doctor.
- 6** Do remember to be calm and polite at all times so as not to alarm the affected child, parents/caregivers and the other children.



Things to remember:

- Make sure the children wash their hands frequently with soap and running water, particularly at these times:
- when they enter school
 - before and after eating
 - after play time
 - after using the toilet.

- Remind children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue while coughing or sneezing.

- Please refer to the following guides for more information:
- All about Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HPB Booklet)
 - Guidelines on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases in Child Care Centres/ Kindergartens/Pre-school Centres.



We would like to thank "Learning By the Park" Child Care Centre for the photographs (excludes front cover photograph).

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