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| 4771 | 26.07.2018 | 27.07.2018 | Pune Maharashtra | www.timesofindia.com/English https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/toddlers-more-vulnerable-to-hand-foot-mouth-disease/articleshowprint/65140207.cms |
| Title: | Toddlers more vulnerable to hand, foot & mouth disease in district Pune, Maharashtra | | | |
| Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC | Information communicated to DSU- Pune, SSU- Maharashtra | | | |

The hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), which is characterised by painful rashes, throat infection and fever, is fast spreading among children, especially those below three years, in the city.

"If a child shows loss of appetite and has mouth ulcers, it is time to consult a doctor," paediatrician Sanjay Mankar, who sees around 8-10 cases every day at his hospital on Sinhagad Road, said.

Mankar said the disease is mainly seen in children below five years of age. "This year, however, more cases are seen in children below three years of age. I have seen many such cases since last two weeks. The disease spread is rapid and has not subsided," he added.

HFMD is contagious, hence, infected children should stay away from schools till they completely recover.

"A sizable number of infected children have vesicles (fluid filled lesions) on bums, while a few of them have complained of ulcers in the oral cavity. The lesions are more on the upper and lower limbs and buttocks," Mankar said.

Save Water- Save Life, Save a tree- Don't print unless it's really necessary!

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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Paediatrician Jayant Joshi, past president of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP), Pune chapter, said, "Parents should not send infected children to school for five to seven days till the new lesions have stopped appearing and all the existing ones are showing signs of recovery."

CLOSE WATCH
Coxsackievirus and enterovirus are the major causative agents of HFMD in India

EARLY SIGNS

- Hand, foot and mouth disease usually starts with a fever, poor appetite, a vague feeling of being unwell and sore throat
- One or two days after fever starts, painful sores usually develop at the back of the mouth. They begin as small red spots and often become ulcers
- A skin rash develops over one or two days, which has flat or raised red spots, sometimes with blisters, usually on the palms and soles of the feet. It may also appear on the knees, elbows, buttocks or genitals

THE VIRUS

- In 2013, scientists at the city-based National Institute of Virology had confirmed the presence of enterovirus
- The infection caused by this virus is usually mild. Hence, there is no need to panic

HOW TEACHERS CAN HELP

- They can look out for children with fever, rashes or blisters on their palms and soles to ensure that the infected child stays away from school for at least 10 days after the onset of the symptoms

10 DAYS TO CURE

THE DISEASE IS SELF-LIMITING AND HEALS IN **7-10 DAYS**

- It spreads through skin-to-skin contact among children. The treatment is mainly symptomatic, given just to relieve the pain

A PERSON WITH A HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IS MOST CONTAGIOUS DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF ILLNESS

PERSONS INFECTED WITH THE VIRUSES THAT CAUSE HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE MAY NOT GET ALL THE SYMPTOMS OF THE DISEASE

Joshi, who sees three to four children every day with HFMD, corroborated that the lesions seen in HFMD are more on bums than in oral cavity this year.

Paediatrician Sanjay Lalwani, president of IAP, Pune chapter, said, "The disease is self-limiting. Hence, there is no need to panic. However, it spreads through contact and can spread fast in small-sized classrooms where children come in close contact. Infected children take five to seven days to recover and teachers should be sensitized about the disease so that they can play an active role in preventing the spread."

Lalwani, however, added that the disease is mild and does not cause any complication. "Usually oral healing takes around four to five days and skin lesions takes around two weeks to heal. The rash does not leave any scar. The treatment is mainly symptomatic with medicines given to relieve pain and discomfort," he said.

Doctors advise frequent washing of hands, keeping the surroundings clean and following hygienic practices to keep the disease at bay.

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Though it involves rashes, HFMD should not be mistaken with chickenpox. "Unlike rashes in chickenpox, which causes mild itching, HFMD rashes do not cause any itching. Another difference is that in the case of chickenpox vesicles (blisters) are seen on back and abdomen and it is caused by a different virus," senior paediatrician Sharad Agarkhedkar said.

Parents should keep on coaxing infected children to eat softened food, while ensuring adequate water intake. "The reason for rapid spread of HFMD is child-to-child contact in schools. I see an average of five to six cases every day," Agarkhedkar said.

Experts said the infection spreads through direct contact and fomites. "The virus enters the body when virus-laden things like toys and fingers are put in the mouth. This habit is particularly common among young children making them vulnerable. The virus can also spread through droplets when the affected child coughs or sneezes," they added.

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