



# ST JOHN'S SCHOOL

6 Stuart Road, Telephone & Facsimile (03) 4449-514, Ranfurly

## Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

One of our school children has this at the moment, and it is important that you are aware of what it is and know how to treat it.

1. Anyone can get hand, foot and mouth disease, but it is most common in children under 10.

2. If your child has hand, foot and mouth disease, they'll have painful sores in their mouth and a rash with blisters on their hands and feet. Human hand, foot and mouth disease is not related to foot and mouth disease in animals.

3. Mild fever is usually the first sign of hand, foot and mouth disease. This starts 3–5 days after your child has been exposed to the disease.

4. After the fever starts, your child may develop other symptoms, including:

- painful red blisters on their tongue, mouth, palms of their hands, or soles of their feet
- loss of appetite
- a sore throat and mouth
- a general feeling of weakness or tiredness.

5. The disease is usually mild and lasts 3–7 days.

6. It can be confused with:

- chickenpox (but the chickenpox rash is all over the body)
- cold sores in a child's mouth.
- the only medicine recommended for hand, foot and mouth disease is paracetamol.
- Most blisters disappear without causing problems. In the mouth, however, some may form shallow, painful sores that look similar to cold sores. If your child's mouth is sore, don't give them sour, salty or spicy foods.
- Make sure they drink plenty of liquids to avoid getting dehydrated.

7. Hand, foot and mouth disease is spread by coughing or sneezing, or by contact with mucus, saliva, blisters or the bowel movements of an infected person.

8. Children are contagious ('catching') for around 7–10 days.

9. Keep your child home from childcare or school until blisters have dried. If blisters are able to be covered and the child is feeling well, they will not need to be excluded.

- Frequent hand washing helps decrease the chance of becoming infected.
- Staying away from others who have the disease and not sharing toys during the infection also helps prevent the disease.

If you have any questions you are best to visit the pharmacy to clarify these.

Geraldine Duncan

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Geraldine".