

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (56) in CDB/8/22/1 Pt.4
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21 November 2025

Dear Doctor,

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease Activity Remains at a High Level

I would like to draw your attention to the continued increase in hand, foot and mouth Disease (HFMD) activity, which currently remains at a high level, and enlist your support in prevention of the disease.

The latest surveillance data from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health indicated an increasing trend in the number of HFMD outbreaks in institutions and schools over the past few weeks. A total of 17 outbreaks (affecting 50 persons) were recorded in the week ending 1 November, rising to 20 outbreaks (affecting 53 persons) and 25 outbreaks (affecting 61 persons) in the weeks ending 8 November and 15 November, respectively. In the first five days of this week, 16 outbreaks have already been recorded, affecting 40 persons.

In addition, CHP's sentinel surveillance in kindergartens/child care centres (KG/CCC) and private medical practitioner clinics showed that HFMD activity remains at a high level since late October this year. Data from syndromic surveillance in Accident & Emergency Departments also indicated a recent upsurge in HFMD activity. So far, three cases of severe paediatric enterovirus infection (other than EV71 and poliovirus) have been recorded this year.

HFMD is a common disease in children caused by enteroviruses such as coxsackieviruses and enterovirus 71 (EV71). In Hong Kong, HFMD occurs throughout the year, with the usual peak season occurring from May to July and from October to December. HFMD mainly affects young children



with outbreaks commonly occurring in KG/CCC. Common causative agents of HFMD include coxsackieviruses, EV71 and other enteroviruses. The incubation period ranges from three to seven days. The disease is mainly transmitted through the faecal-oral route, but direct contact with open and weeping skin vesicles may also spread the virus. An infected person is most contagious during the first week of illness and the virus can be found in stools for weeks thereafter. Although HFMD is usually self-limiting, some patients, especially those infected with EV71, may develop complications like myocarditis, encephalitis, or poliomyelitis-like paralysis.

We would like to enlist your support in providing the following health advice to HFMD patients and their carers/parents:

- ◆ Children with HFMD should refrain from nurseries/kindergartens/schools, social activities and swimming until all vesicles have dried up and symptoms subsided;
- ◆ Seek medical advice urgently if they develop symptoms or signs suggestive of severe illnesses such as persistent high fever, decrease in alertness, or deterioration in general condition;
- ◆ Protect other family members, especially children, from getting the infection through strict personal and environmental hygiene. **Alcohol-based handrub should not substitute hand hygiene with liquid soap and water, as alcohol does not effectively kill some viruses causing HFMD (e.g. EV71);** and
- ◆ As EV71 is associated with higher risk of complications and the virus may be excreted in stools for some weeks, the CHP advises children suffering from laboratory confirmed EV71 infection to **stay away from school for two additional weeks** after symptoms have subsided.

Please report cases of EV71 infection and severe paediatric enterovirus infection (other than EV71 and poliovirus) to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of the CHP by fax (2477 2770) or phone (2477 2772) during office hours, or call our Medical Control Officer at 9260 7090 outside office hours. The reporting form and the case definition as well as

online reporting are also available on CENO On-line website (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html). The CHP will carry out epidemiological investigation for these cases and take appropriate control measures.

The latest surveillance data on HFMD and EV71 are published in the weekly “*EV Scan*” (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/guideline1_year/29/134/441/502.html). Further information can be found from the following webpage: http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/16354.html. Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/working with you to the above. Thank you for your unfailing support in the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dr. Albert AU', written in a cursive style.

(Dr Albert AU)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health