Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease
Information for the Loyola Community

What is Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD)?
HFMD is a common, contagious viral illness that usually affects infants and young children but can affect adults as well. It is most commonly caused by a coxsackievirus. Outbreaks of the disease are more common in summer and autumn in the United States and other temperate climates. HFMD is usually not serious, and nearly all people recover in 7-10 days without medical treatment.

Symptoms
HFMD may cause some or all of the following signs and symptoms:
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Feeling of being unwell (malaise)
- Painful, red, blister-like lesions on the tongue, gums and inside of the cheeks
- A red rash, without itching but sometimes with blistering, on the palms, soles and sometimes other areas
- Loss of appetite
The usual period from initial infection to the onset of signs and symptoms (incubation period) is 3 to 6 days. A fever is often the first sign of HFMD, followed by a sore throat and sometimes a poor appetite and malaise. One or 2 days after the fever begins, painful sores may develop in the mouth or throat. A rash on the hands and feet and possibly elsewhere can follow within one or 2 days.

Transmission
People with HFMD are most contagious during the first week of their illness. However, they may remain contagious for weeks after symptoms go away. Some people may not develop any symptoms, but they can still spread the viruses to others.
Oral ingestion is the main source of coxsackievirus infection and HFMD. The illness spreads by person-to-person contact with an infected person's:
- Nose and throat secretions (such as saliva, sputum, or nasal mucus)
- Fluid from blisters
- Stool
- Respiratory droplets sprayed into the air after a cough or sneeze

Prevention
There is no vaccine to protect against HFMD. Certain precautions can help reduce the risk of infection with HFMD and other common viruses:
- **Wash hands carefully.** Be sure to wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, especially after using the toilet and before preparing food and eating. When soap and water aren't available, use hand wipes or gels treated with germ-killing alcohol.
- **Disinfect common areas.** Get in the habit of cleaning and disinfecting high-traffic areas and surfaces. Disinfecting wipes are available in all Loyola classrooms.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**
- **Avoiding sharing cups, dishes, and utensils.**
- **Avoid close contact with anyone who is showing symptoms.**
What you should do if you have symptoms or concerns

There is no specific treatment for HFMD. Fever and pain can be managed with over-the-counter fever reducers and pain relievers, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. It is important for people with HFMD to drink enough fluids to prevent loss of body fluids or dehydration.

Students who are experiencing HFMD symptoms or have concerns about HFMD should contact Loyola Health Services:

- On weekdays from 8:30 a.m.—5 p.m., call 410-617-5055
- After hours and on weekends, call Sinai Hospital at 410-583-9396 and the on-call provider will return your call
- In any life-threatening health emergency, call Campus Safety at 410-617-5911

Employees should contact their healthcare provider. If you are diagnosed with HFMD, please notify Loyola Student Health Services at the number listed above.

You can learn more about HFMD at cdc.gov. If you have any questions about HFMD or other wellness concerns, please contact Student Health Services at 410-617-5055.