

**MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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Superintendent of Schools  
William O. George III, Ed.D.

Mary E. Walker  
Assistant Superintendent of Operations

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September 26, 2016

Dear parents,

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has received reports of illness among high school students in five counties in New Jersey. Although some of the cases reported were due to Coxsackie virus, the virus that causes Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD), it is not clear if all of the reported illness is HFMD or if other viruses are involved. Currently, there are two unconfirmed cases of HFMD at Middletown High School South.

HFMD is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing, or contact with blister fluid or feces (stool) of an infected person. This illness is commonly seen in the summer and early fall. A person with HFMD is most contagious the first week of the illness. Most individuals have typical symptoms of HFMD and recover without complications. Symptoms of Coxsackie virus may include:

- Skin rash (flat or bumpy red spots) and possibly blisters on the palms of the hands and/or soles of the feet. The rash may also appear on the knees or elbows.
- Fever (100° F or higher), sore throat, runny nose or poor appetite.

While there is no specific treatment for this illness, there are over-the-counter and prescription medicines that can help relieve symptoms. To prevent the spread of HFMD, the District has increased cleaning of commonly touched surfaces. The NJDOH also recommends the following to reduce the spread of the virus.

- Increase hand washing with soap and water or alcohol hand rub (must contain 60% alcohol).
- Avoid close contact such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils, water bottles or cups with infected people.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your inner elbow or a tissue, and throw the tissue away immediately.

NJDOH does not recommend excluding individuals from school or sports who do not have symptoms (asymptomatic). To protect others from infection, exclusion from school or sports is recommended for ill individuals until they are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine. The decision about whether an individual is healthy enough to return to sports should be made by their health care provider.

Additional information is available through the links below.

- NJDOH: <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/faq/hfmdfaq.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/>

Sincerely,



Mary E. Walker  
Assistant Superintendent of Operations