

Isolation or Exclusion Criteria for Common Communicable Diseases for Healthcare Professionals

Hand Foot and Mouth (HFMD)

HFMD commonly spreads among children of pre-school age. Older children may also be affected. It is very infectious.

1. HFMD is transmitted by:

- a. Respiratory droplets
- b. Fluid from vesicles (blisters)
- c. Stool

2. Children are most infectious during the first week of illness

Viral shedding may occur in throat secretions for up to 2 weeks and in stools for up to 11 weeks.

3. Children with HFMD are excluded from school/daycare until:

- a. 7 days from symptoms onset have passed **AND**
- b. at least 24 hours have passed without fever (without using any fever-reducing medications) **AND**
- c. there is no drooling of saliva **AND**
- d. all blisters have crusted over **AND**
- e. the child feels well

4. Advice for Doctors:

Doctors should advise patients/caregivers to exclude patient from school/ daycare until the above criteria have been fulfilled, on taking fluids and rest and not let other children (not living in the household) visit the household during the exclusion. Information about potential complications and guidance on when to seek healthcare for the complications should be explained.

5. Role of school

During an HFMD outbreak in the community, precautions should be taken in school to ensure that transmission risk is reduced, including:

- a. remove soft toys and shared toys/puzzles and other shared items temporarily until outbreak is over
- b. Any child with rash, blisters with fluid, fever should be sent home
- c. Any items that cannot be removed should be regularly cleaned and disinfected or not be used (e.g. play swings, slides)
- d. commonly touched surfaces should be first cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected
- e. Clean and disinfect toilets between every session
- f. Ensure that those who are caring for children such as those who change nappies/assist children in the toilet are washing their hands with soap and water after helping each child
- g. For disinfection, dilute 1 part bleach to 20 parts water, put this solution on surfaces for minimum 5 minutes.
- h. Keep hand sanitizers in classroom. Encourage teachers and students to use it frequently.

6. Role of Public Health Units

- a. report cases to surveillance system
- b. give information to public about prevention
- c. guide schools/ daycares on prevention measures outlined above

Chickenpox

Chicken pox is a communicable disease commonly producing epidemics.

1. Chickenpox is transmitted by:

- a. airborne spread through respiratory secretions
- b. direct contact (with vesicle fluids, respiratory secretions)
- c. indirect contact (contact with bedsheets, towels, clothes etc soiled with vesicle fluid and respiratory secretions)

Chickenpox patients are infectious from 1-2 days before symptom onset until all vesicles have dried (all blisters have black crust on them), usually about 5 days.

Infectious period can be longer among those with poor immunity.

2. Exclusion period from work/school/daycare:

Patients should be excluded until:

- a. at least 5 days have passed from onset of symptoms
- b. no new blisters are forming
- c. all blisters have crusted over (the crusts do not need to have fallen off)
- d. people who are vaccinated (especially contacts who are vaccinated after contact with patient) may develop disease. In this case, it is milder and may not develop lesions that crust. They need to be excluded until no new lesions have appeared for 24 hours
- e. All admitted patients should be isolated until the above criteria has been met

3. Doctors should advise patients/caregivers to:

- a. Exclude from work/ school/ daycare/ crowded places until the above exclusion period criteria has been met
- b. Explain complications and when to seek additional care
- c. Prescribe the varicella vaccine for contacts who are not immunized and are eligible. Vaccine is effective in infection prevention or decreased severity if administered within 3 days. However, some effects may be observed until about 5 days after exposure
- d. Varicella vaccine is available for purchase upon prescription from some pharmacies.
- e. Since Varicella vaccine is live, pregnant women, immunocompromised individuals, and those with blood disorders and neoplasm affecting bone marrow are not eligible to be vaccinated.
- f. High risk contacts who are not eligible for vaccination are eligible for passive immunization with immunoglobulin. However, availability is limited locally
- g. Explain complications and when to seek additional care

Contact National Immunization Program for further information on varicella vaccination.

4. Role of Public Health Unit

- a. Report cases to surveillance system
- b. Advise on isolation and other preventive measures
- c. Provide information to public

5. Role of Health Facility

- a. Ensure all staff who are not immune through natural infection are vaccinated
- b. Ensure mechanisms for isolating patients who require admission
- c. Ensure high risk staff (e.g. pregnant staff who are not immune) do not attend cases

6. Role of Schools/ Workplaces/ Daycare:

- Ensure schools/ daycare and residential care staff (e.g. child protection services and residential child-care facilities, prisons, old age/ disabled care services) are fully vaccinated
- If a person in a residential care facility is diagnosed with chickenpox, make arrangements for providing routine care while in isolation.
- Exclude children or staff in daycares and school until the exclusion period is completed.
- Assist public health staff to identify contacts and arrange vaccination for eligible, non-immune contacts among staff/residents.

Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis can be infectious (due to bacteria or virus) or due to allergies.

Bacterial conjunctivitis may cause thick discharge from the eyes. Viral conjunctivitis can occur in one or both eyes, while the discharge is usually watery and clear.

Allergic conjunctivitis usually affects both eyes and can be accompanied by other symptoms of seasonal allergies such as sneezing, itchy nose, watery eyes.

Transmission:

Through direct contact with secretions from eyes, nose and throat of a person with conjunctivitis or contact with objects contaminated with these secretions. Patients remain infectious as long as there is discharge.

Exclusion from School (for bacterial and viral conjunctivitis):

Until discharge from eyes have stopped.