

Eat Well, Move Well, BE WELL

Keep your child in tip-top health by staying up to date on how you can minimise childhood illnesses, teach him positive food habits and ensure he gets enough exercise.



HAND
FOOT
MOUTH
DISEASE

PHYSICAL
& MENTAL
HEALTH

HEADS UP ON HFMD

How you can help to prevent this common childhood illness

Hand foot mouth disease (HFMD) is one of the many viral infections that can crop up in young children. Infections are usually mild and serious complications are rare, but there no vaccine for it, so prevention is key.

"HFMD is a viral infection caused by a group of enteroviruses, most commonly the Coxsackie virus. The incubation period of HFMD is three to five days, with symptoms [that can range] from two days to two weeks," says Associate Professor Chong Chia Yin, Senior Consultant Infectious Disease Service, Department of Paediatrics, at the KK Women's And Children's Hospital.

Enteroviruses, which infect possibly a billion or more people worldwide each year, are small, very contagious viruses made of ribonucleic acid (RNA) and protein.

Symptoms for HFMD include a rash or blisters on the child's hands, feet and buttocks, ulcers in the throat and/or mouth, on the tongue, fever, headache, a sore throat, a runny nose, vomiting, diarrhoea, fatigue and/or loss of appetite.

The infection is spread by direct contact with the nasal discharge, saliva, faeces, or fluids from the rash of an infected person. Practicing good personal hygiene is the best way to protect you and your child from HFMD.

A/PROF CHONG SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING TIPS:

1 TO PREVENT HFMD



Wash hands with soap and water before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.



Keep cutlery, towels, toothbrushes and other personal items for personal use only. Do not share these.



Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.



2 IF YOUR CHILD HAS HFMD

- Keep him home and away from pre-school and public places.
- Separate him from other children/people at home, as far as possible.
- Inform the kindergarten or child care centre immediately so they can take precautions.
- Avoid kissing or hugging the infected child.
- Look out for symptoms in other family members, both children and adults.



Visit MyActiveSG.com for more information on sport programmes for your child, including Junior Athletics as well as Football, Basketball, Tennis and many more.

GET MOVING

Keep your child active to boost his physical and mental health

Most children are not getting as much physical activity as they should. Exercise not only helps your child feel better, but can also help his cognitive development, mental alertness, psychomotor skills and socio-emotional development. "Research shows that sports can help build healthy levels of self-esteem in a child, which in turn enhance their confidence as individuals," says Ms Ung Bee Koon, Assistant Director at Sports SG. Furthermore, playing team sports has manifold benefits. "Doing so puts children in situations where they must learn to work together in order to overcome obstacles. The rigours of training and learning how to negotiate with different personalities within the team will play a large part in developing positive character traits such as discipline, resilience, leadership and teamwork."

HOW YOU CAN ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO BE MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE:



Cut down on his screen time.

Set reasonable limits (as a guideline, no more than two hours a day), or only allow screen time after certain requirements have been met (homework done, gone outdoors for exercise/play, chores completed etc).

Make exercise a regular part of his routine. How about a daily evening power walk after dinner? Or you could sign him up for regular swimming, tennis or martial arts lessons.

Find an activity you can do together. Why not train for a fun run as a family; having a common goal is a good way to bond as well. Or you could learn a new sport together.



3 IF THERE IS AN OUTBREAK OF HFMD IN YOUR CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN OR CHILD CARE

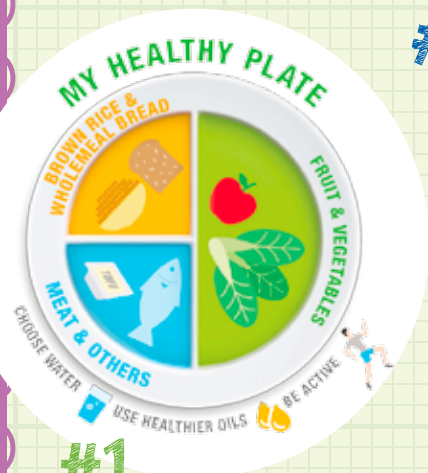
- Monitor your child's temperature daily.
- Wash his hands before he leaves for home.
- Have him shower and shampoo his hair, and change into a clean set of clothes after getting home.
- Check for mouth ulcers and blisters on his hands and feet daily.
- Consult your family doctor if you notice any symptoms.



4 NUTRITION MYTHS BUSTED

Eating to health.

By Denise Tan, Nutritionist, Health Promotion Board



#1

A child's food intake should not be restricted, as a big appetite is a sign of a healthy child.

False. While you shouldn't impose food restrictions on a growing child, it is important to control the portion sizes of each meal, using the recommended number of servings for each food group as a guide. Here is what a healthy meal should look like (top), and these are the approximate proportions of each food group that should be included in a healthy meal.

#3 Fruits are a good enough substitute if a child refuses to eat vegetables.

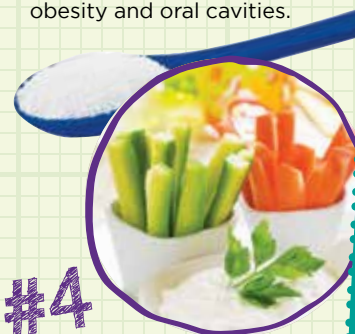
False. Fruits and vegetables are two food groups that offer different combinations of nutrients and phytochemicals. For instance, vegetables are higher in iron, folate, and dietary fibre while fruits are higher in vitamin C. It is only by eating both fruits and vegetables that a child gets a wide range of nutrients and phytochemicals.



#2

Sugar makes children hyper.

False. Sugar may not be the cause of a child's hyperactivity. Studies have found that while sugar does not affect a child's behaviour, sugar consumption causes a rapid rise in blood sugar level, leading to an adrenaline rush that has similar symptoms to hyperactivity. And while sugar may not be linked to hyperactivity, overconsumption of it is linked to an increased risk of obesity and oral cavities.



#4

Snacking between meals should be avoided as snacks are bad for a child's health.

False. Totally eliminating snacks is not practical, for adults and children alike. Snacks can play an important role in a child's diet if nutrient-dense options are provided. Examples include yogurt with fruit, cheese and whole-grain crackers, as well as vegetable sticks with a small amount of a favourite dip (such as peanut butter). These snacks are good alternatives to potato chips or cookies in satisfying a child's between-meal hunger pangs and will prevent overeating at the next meal. ♥

WITH LITTLE ONES IN MIND

Two books to benefit children and parents.

LITTLE PEA

By Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Little Pea is a happy little pea who loves hanging out with friends, and playing with his mom and dad. But there is one thing he really dislikes... eating candy. Papa says that little peas need to eat their candy to grow up big and strong. One day, Mama tells Little Pea that he has to finish his meal of five pieces of candy before he can eat his favourite dessert... spinach! Children will enjoy this offbeat role reversal of a story as they relate themselves to Little Pea in the story.

Contributed by Lim Sieu Pin, Senior Librarian, National Library Board



THE PEDIATRICIAN'S GUIDE TO FEEDING BABIES AND TODDLERS

By Anthony F Porto and Dina M DiMaggio

Written by four paediatricians, a dietician, a lactation consultant and two chefs, this book is a handy nutrition guide for parents. The manual is organised into five chapters according to age groups (0-3 months to the toddler years). Each section contains basic nutritional guidelines, recipes and common medical concerns, as well as personal solutions and stories from the experts themselves.

Contributed by Law Xiang Qing, Associate Librarian, National Library Board

