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**To: GPs
School Nurse Team Leads
Education Departments for cascading to schools
and nurseries / pre-school settings**

Date 12th October 2011
Your Ref
Our Ref SA/VM/MMcL

Enquiries to PHPU
Direct Line 0141 201 4917
E-mail phpu@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Dear Colleague

HAND FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

Currently there are many reports in nurseries and schools of a generally mild viral illness known as Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD). Often there is a pattern of small outbreaks in children attending nurseries and schools. This is a common occurrence in early autumn.

HFMD is characterised by a rash which develops into small blisters on the hands and mouth ulcers on the inner cheeks, gums and tongue. Children affected with HFMD may develop a sore throat and a high temperature. The virus is spread to other children by coughs, sneezes and mouth secretions. It has absolutely no association and is completely different with Foot and Mouth Disease in cattle, sheep and pigs.

The best way to prevent spread of the disease while the child is unwell is to keep the child at home. **When the child feels well they can return to school or nursery.** There is no need to wait for the last blisters to disappear. (There may be children in the school spreading the virus who have been infected but are not unwell). Good hand washing and hygiene standards should be encouraged.

No treatment is required for this disease. Fluid replacement and use of over the counter products such as paracetamol can be used as required. Recovery usually takes a few days.

Adults rarely catch the disease as most have immunity from catching HFMD in childhood. In the unusual event of a pregnant women catching HFMD, there should be no additional concern.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Syed Ahmed'.

Dr. Syed Ahmed
Consultant in Public Health Medicine