

Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease

Definition Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is an acute self-limiting contagious viral infection transmitted from one individual to another.

Etiology Coxsackievirus A16, and rarely other strains.

Clinical features The disease usually affects children and young adults, and often occurs in epidemics. Oral manifestations are always present, and are characterized by small vesicles (5–30 in number) that rapidly rupture, leaving painful, shallow ulcers (2–6 mm in diameter) surrounded by a red halo (Fig. 107). The buccal mucosa, tongue, and labial mucosa are the most commonly affected sites. Skin lesions are not constant, and present as small vesicles with a narrow red halo. The lateral borders and the dorsal surfaces of the fingers and toes are the most common areas involved. Lesions may appear on the palms, soles, and buttocks. The disease lasts five to eight days. The diagnosis is made on the basis of clinical criteria.

Differential diagnosis Aphthous ulcers, herpes simplex infection, herpangina.

Treatment Supportive.

Erythema Multiforme

Definition Erythema multiforme is an acute or subacute self-limiting disease that involves the skin and mucous membranes.

Etiology The etiology is unclear. However, an immunologically mediated process triggered by herpes simplex or *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, drugs, radiation, or malignancies, is probable.

Clinical features The disease more frequently affects young men between the ages of 20 and 30 years. The oral lesions present as coalescing small vesicles that rupture within two or three days, leaving irregular, painful erosions covered by a necrotic pseudomembrane (Fig. 108). The lips, buccal mucosa, tongue, soft palate, and floor of the mouth are most commonly involved. The skin manifestations consist of erythematous, flat, round macules, papules, or plaques, usually in a symmetrical pat-



Fig. 107 Hand-foot-and-mouth disease: shallow ulcers on the buccal mucosa.



Fig. 108 Erythema multiforme: multiple erosions on the lips and tongue.