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## **PRIMARY SCHOOLS, PARENTS AND CORPORATE SPONSOR ROPED IN TO TACKLE HFMD**

*With about 14 per cent of all Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease cases occurring in primary schools, the Health Promotion Board is roping in primary school teachers, parents and corporate sponsor Dettol to step up outreach efforts and encourage a proactive approach.*

**Singapore, 11 September 2012:** There are 31,590 reported cases of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) for the year to date -- compared to 20,687 cases recorded for the whole of 2011.

2. While pre-schools are traditionally perceived as places where HFMD is likely to strike, statistics show that about 14 per cent of cases occur in primary schools.
3. To complement outreach efforts in pre-schools addressing the spread of HFMD and other infectious diseases such as flu, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) is launching the Hand Hygiene Programme in primary schools. Not only will this help ensure that infectious diseases have no place there as well, it will also strengthen HPB's Hand Hygiene Programme in pre-schools by reaching out to pre-schoolers' siblings in primary schools.
4. The primary school programme will reinforce the 8-step Hand-washing Technique (refer to Annex A) among Student Health Ambassadors, who will also be taught how infectious diseases are spread as well as socially responsible actions to prevent their spread such as covering one's mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
5. The aim is to harness the power of peer influence by getting these Student Health Ambassadors to remind their friends and classmates the importance of observing a high standard of personal hygiene at all times to prevent infectious diseases.

6. In addition, HPB is partnering Dettol, who is committing \$360,000 over the next three years to bring a fun and interactive roving skit to every primary school to teach children proper hand-washing techniques and other steps they can take to protect themselves against infections.

7. Said Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, HPB: “Hand washing can reduce cases of infectious diseases such as diarrhoea, flu and HFMD by 45 per cent. This is why it is so important to instil good personal hygiene habits in children, who pick up germs easily because they are naturally curious and enjoy exploring their environment with their hands. HPB also believes in constant vigilance beyond the classroom in the fight against infectious diseases, and this is where parents play an important role. According to a HPB survey last year, about 85 per cent of parents were aware of at least two HFMD symptoms, but I would like as many as nine out of 10 -- if not all -- parents to be aware. To remind caregivers to be on the alert for HFMD symptoms and keep children who are unwell at home, HPB will be pushing out advertorials, editorials, radio advertisements, phone text messages as well as messages on HPB’s Facebook page and Twitter feed. In addition, HPB will also work with Parents Support Groups to provide health prompters for parents to place conveniently around the home.”

8. Said Mr Philip Chang, Sales Director, Reckitt Benckiser Singapore: “Health habits are best inculcated at a young age, which is why Dettol is proud to be a part of HPB’s Hand Hygiene Programme and help reach out to 200 primary schools over three years in our bid to fight germs and create a healthier living environment for all of us.”

**Issued by Health Promotion Board**

## Annex A

Eight simple steps to keep your hands clean:

