



Every 60 Seconds

Every sixty seconds, someone new gets genital herpes. Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that is caused by a virus called *herpes simplex virus* (HSV).



About 45 million Americans have genital herpes. All kinds of people have it. If you are sexually active, you could get it too. There is no way to tell by looking at a person that they could give you this disease.

Most people with genital herpes do not know they have it, and they spread it to others.

Herpes is not curable, but the symptoms can be treated to ease the pain. The disease can also become latent ("go into hiding") for a while. Even so, the disease remains in the body for life after infection, and it could flare up again.

The best way to keep from suffering from herpes is never to get it in the first place. Herpes is spread through skin-to-skin contact of an infected area. Correctly used latex condoms **can decrease, but not eliminate**, your chances of getting genital herpes.

Identifying the Virus

The herpes simplex virus (HSV) causes genital herpes. There are two types of HSV:

- Herpes simplex 1 usually occurs around the mouth or lips. People often call these "cold sores." Any adult or child can get herpes simplex 1 on the mouth by kissing or coming into contact with someone who has a sore. Herpes sores from the mouth can be transferred to the genitals.
- Herpes simplex 2 (genital herpes) usually occurs in the genital and anal areas. It can be transferred to the mouth through sexual contact.

Herpes Interacts with Other Medical Conditions

- Babies may be affected during birth. Tell your doctor that you or your sex partner has had genital herpes. Herpes can be life threatening for newborns, but women can deliver healthy babies with proper care.
- People with suppressed immune systems (like individuals with HIV/AIDS) experience more severe symptoms.
- As with any infection, it is important for women with genital herpes to have regular Pap tests.

Genital Herpes Complications

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/problems



For More Information

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for an extension of this pamphlet.

Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links.

Test your understanding with a quick quiz.

National STD Hotline:
(800) 227-8922

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the dark.
Get In the Know!**



Genital Herpes

*problem for
a lifetime*



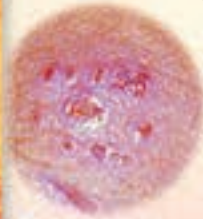
in the know

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An Outbreak

Some people have symptoms of genital herpes within days of being exposed to the virus. In others, weeks, months, or years may go by before they have an outbreak (sores or lesions). Some outbreaks are so mild that the person might not notice them. Usually, the first outbreak is the most serious. It can be difficult to know when the original infection occurred because so much time can go by between the infection and an outbreak.



Possible outbreak symptoms:

- Reddish, painful bumps (like pimples) on the penis or on women's genitals (inside or outside); usually filled with clear fluid.
- Bumps, sores, or lesions on the thighs or buttocks.
- Burning, itching, tingling, or numbness in the genital area.
- Headache, fever, muscle aches, swollen glands (with first time infection).
- Possible burning on urination and discharge from the penis or vagina.

The red bumps may turn into groups of small blisters that are filled with fluid containing the virus. Later, the blisters fill with pus and break open, becoming extremely painful sores.



Ongoing Problems

Genital herpes is very contagious during an outbreak, especially when the sores are open. Most sores heal within twelve days or so. The disease can also be spread when no sores are present.

Outbreaks may last for three to six weeks. After this time, the virus remains in the body waiting for a chance to break out again.

If you have any sore, lesion, or rash in your genital area, have it checked by a doctor. Don't use any kind of ointment or cream unless instructed to by a doctor.

More About Symptoms

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/symptoms

A Return Engagement

Some people never have genital herpes symptoms again after their first outbreak. But most people experience outbreaks four or five times a year.

Often, a person will have some signs that another outbreak is coming, such as itching, tenderness, or pain where the sores had been before, or pain in the legs or buttocks.

None For Me!

Just as with any STD, preventing genital herpes is the best policy. The only way to be sure you won't get it is not to have sexual contact. If you and your one *uninfected* sex partner have been tested for STDs, you can't get them from each other.

Genital herpes can be sneaky. Correctly used latex condoms protect somewhat against infection, but they're not perfect. It's pretty common for an infected person to have herpes sores (even tiny ones) that aren't covered by a condom.

If herpes blisters are present inside the sex organs (on the cervix or inside the penis), the person might not know about the outbreak. In those cases, a condom could help prevent the spread of herpes.

If no symptoms are present, only a very expensive blood test can detect genital herpes.

Prevent Genital Herpes

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/prevent

Making Matters Worse

Doctors don't know why some people have many outbreaks of genital herpes and others have few. It does seem that some conditions could make outbreaks more likely. Some of these conditions are stress, depression, exposure to sunlight or wind, other infections (such as colds), lack of sleep, poor diet, friction from tight clothing, or hormonal body changes (such as in pregnancy or menstruation).

Help for the Hurt

Genital herpes cannot be cured, but there is help for the symptoms.

- Antiviral drugs (creams or pills) can speed up the healing of outbreaks.
- Prescription anesthetic ointments can reduce the pain of blisters.
- A nurse or doctor may suggest other comforting treatments.



Treatment Options

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/treat

Prevention Is the Key

Not having sexual contact at all or having sex with only one uninfected partner is the best method to avoid getting genital herpes.

If you are infected, do the right things: Tell your partner, don't have sex during an outbreak, and use latex condoms carefully between outbreaks to reduce the chance of spread.



blisters

no cure

sneaky