
Testing

A **viral-culture test** can be done 2-12 days after exposure. This test involves taking a tissue sample or scraping of the sores for examination in the laboratory.

Treatment

Genital herpes treatment includes oral prescription antiviral medications. Topical anesthetic powder or gel is also helpful. There's no cure for genital herpes. But with treatment, you might:

- Help sores heal sooner during an initial outbreak
- Lessen the severity and duration of symptoms in recurrent outbreaks
- Reduce the frequency of recurrences

Minimize the chance of transmitting the herpes virus to another.

Prevention

Total absence of skin-to-skin contact is the only way to avoid transmission. Condoms and latex dams are only partially protective. Lesions may be present in areas not covered.

* The CU Healthy Program gratefully acknowledges the Mayo Clinic as a resource for the information in this brochure

CU Healthy

HCS wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website (carleton.ca/health)
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or email us at carletonwellness@gmail.com



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Genital Herpes



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What is it?

Genital herpes is a common sexually transmitted disease that affects both men and women.

The cause of genital herpes is a type of herpes simplex virus (HSV), which enters your body through small breaks in your skin or mucous membranes. Sexual contact is the primary way that the virus spreads.

There's no cure for this recurrent infection, which may cause embarrassment and emotional distress. Having genital herpes is no reason to avoid sex or give up on relationships though. If you or your partner is infected, you can manage the spread of HSV by taking steps to protect yourself and your partner.



What are the causes?

Two types of herpes simplex virus infections can cause genital herpes:

- **HSV type 1 (HSV-1).** This is the type that usually causes cold sores or fever blisters around your mouth, though it can be spread to your genital area during oral sex.

- **HSV type 2 (HSV-2).** This is the type that commonly causes genital herpes. The virus spreads through sexual contact and skin-to-skin contact. HSV-2 is very common and highly contagious *whether or not you have an open sore*. However, in many people the infection causes no recognized signs or symptoms and can still be spread to a sexual partner.

Symptoms

When present genital herpes symptoms may include:

- Small red bumps, blisters or open sores in the genital, anal or nearby areas.
- Pain or itching around your genital area, buttocks or inner thighs.

The initial symptom of genital herpes usually is pain or itching, beginning within a few weeks after exposure to an infected sexual partner. After several days, small red bumps may appear. They then rupture, becoming ulcers that ooze or bleed. Eventually, scabs form and the ulcers heal.

In women, sores can erupt in the vaginal area, external genitals, buttocks, anus or cervix. In men, sores can appear on the penis, scrotum, buttocks, anus or thighs or inside the urethra, the channel inside the penis leading to the bladder.



While you have ulcers, it may be painful to urinate. You may also experience pain and tenderness in your genital area until the infection clears. During an initial outbreak, you may have flu-like signs and symptoms, such as headache, muscle aches and fever, as well as swollen lymph nodes in your groin.

Recurrences

Genital herpes is different for each person. The signs and symptoms may recur for years. Some people experience numerous episodes each year. For many people, however, the outbreaks are less frequent as time passes. Various factors may trigger outbreaks, including:

- Stress
- Menstruation
- Immune system suppression, from medications such as steroids or chemotherapy, or due to infections, such as HIV/AIDS
- Illness
- Surgery
- Friction, such as that caused by vigorous sexual intercourse
- Fatigue

In some cases, the infection can be active and contagious even when lesions aren't present.