



Genital Herpes

Did you Know...?

- 1 in 6 adult in the U.S. has genital herpes
- Any form of sexual contact can transmit it (oral or genital contact)
- A person with genital herpes can infect his or her partner during an outbreak or when no visible sores are present
- Recurrent fever blisters or cold sores on the lips are a form of herpes infection, and oral-genital contact can cause genital herpes in a partner
- Women are more susceptible to genital herpes than men
- HSV can infect the eye as well

Signs and Symptoms:

Normal Incubation Period of 3-7 days before initial outbreak

MEN: outbreaks can look like pimples, a rash, or raised bumps underneath the skin. Painful urination can be an associated symptom if sores affect the urethra. In men, genital herpes often is mistaken for jock itch, mosquito bites, ingrown hairs, or hemorrhoids.

WOMEN: the infected area will begin to itch and become red. Blisters develop and break, leaving behind a red area on the skin that often resembles a rash. The infected area will often be mistaken for other skin irritations, such as mosquito bites or ingrown hairs.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

DIAGNOSIS: Normally recognized by a doctor when blisters are observed in clusters in areas that commonly have sexual contact. The fluid within these blisters can be cultured for the virus. Blood tests and DNA tests can also confirm a diagnosis.

TREATMENT: Treatment with antiviral drugs can help speed healing and decrease the frequency of outbreaks. Drug therapy is not a cure but makes living with herpes more manageable. New topical gel treatments are in the clinical trial stage of testing.

Long-Term Health Affects:

- Lifetime of frequent outbreaks
- Can cause inflammation of the rectum, brain, or the membrane that covers the brain
- More susceptible to contracting HIV due to open lesion of skin in genital region

How to Protect Yourself:

- Always practice safer sex through use of condoms.
- Avoid oral sex with an individual with a cold sore.
- Avoid genital contact with a known infected person or one with sores near or on the genital area/mouth.

Always ask your partner about his or her sexual history

If you think you have genital herpes, contact the Student Health Center.

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