

At least **50** million
Americans have
genital herpes

Are you at risk?

Risk factors for genital herpes:

- Having unprotected sex
- Having multiple sex partners
- Having sex with someone who has multiple partners
- Starting sexual activity at a young age

Minimize your risk by:

- Using condoms
- Limiting the number of sex partners
- Include herpes screening as part of your yearly exams

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Our group consists of eight pathologists at two practice sites: Los Gatos and Santa Cruz, serving physicians throughout California.

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HSV

Herpes Simplex Virus



One of the
most important
tools for
women's health.

Information.

Knowledge is power.



Q: What is Herpes?

A: Herpes is a viral infection that causes disease in humans. There are many different types of the herpes virus. Two of the most common types are the herpes simplex viruses that cause oral infections (HSV-1), like cold sores and fever blisters, and cause genital infections (HSV-2), transmitted through sexual intercourse.

Q: What causes Genital Herpes?

A: The herpes simplex virus-2 is the most common cause of genital herpes infection in the United States. Genital herpes is a contagious infection that spreads through close, physical skin-to-skin contact. It is most often spread by sexual contact with someone who already has the herpes virus. It affects both men and women but transmission is more likely to occur from men to women. Once a person is infected, that person may experience frequent outbreaks that appear as blisters, bumps or rashes in the genital area.

Q: What are the symptoms of Genital Herpes?

A: Unfortunately, most people with herpes have mild or no symptoms and are unaware of their infection. However, if symptoms do occur they will appear within 2 to 10 days upon initial exposure and can last 2 to 3 weeks. Sores will appear on the body where the virus has entered, such as the mouth, penis or vagina. Small red bumps appear first, develop into blisters, and then become painful open sores, which become crusty and eventually heal without scarring. Other

symptoms that may occur with the first episode of genital herpes are fever, headache, muscle aches, painful or difficult urination, and swollen glands in the groin area. Once a person is infected with herpes, the virus remains in the body for life.

Q: Can Genital Herpes lead to other health problems?

A: For the most part, genital herpes does not lead to any major medical problems for healthy adults, but there are a few exceptions. When a person's immune system is weak, the herpes episodes can last a long time and be unusually severe. A pregnant woman who gets genital herpes can also pass the virus to her unborn child and may deliver a premature baby. If a woman has an outbreak during delivery with lesions in or near the birth canal, the doctor might do a cesarean section to protect the baby.

Q: How is genital herpes treated?

A: There is no cure for genital herpes. But there are several antiviral medications that can shorten and prevent recurrent outbreaks. A doctor should prescribe the appropriate treatment therapy. The following are steps to speed healing and avoid spreading the infection:

- Keep the infected area clean and dry
- Avoid touching the sores
- Wash your hands after contact with the sores
- Avoid sexual contact from the time you first feel any symptoms until the sores are completely healed

Q: How is Genital Herpes diagnosed?

A: There are a variety of laboratory tests that may be used to diagnose the herpes. Your physician has chosen a test that will check for the herpes simplex virus using the very latest technology. It is the best and quickest method to determine if you are infected with herpes. For convenience, this test can also be done when a woman goes for her annual Pap test.



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