

# Genital Herpes

## What are the symptoms of herpes?

There are two types of herpes virus: **HSV1** and **HSV2**. Both types can cause sores or blisters on or around the genitals or mouth.

Genital herpes often does not cause any symptoms. If you do have symptoms, you might notice:

- Painful blisters or sores on/around the genitals or anus. These sores typically heal within 2-4 weeks.
- Feeling like you have the flu when sores are present.
- Sores that come back several times within a year. The presence of the sores is called an **outbreak**.

**HSV1**, most commonly known as oral herpes, can also cause sores on the mouth or lips, which are called fever blisters.

## How does someone get herpes?

- You can get genital herpes by having anal, oral, or vaginal sex with someone who has it.
- You can also get genital herpes if your genitals touch the infected skin or secretions (like saliva through oral sex) of someone who has it.
- You can get genital herpes even if your partner shows no signs of the infection.

## How can I lower my risk for herpes?

- The surest way is to not have sex.
- Have sex with someone who is not infected and who has sex with only you.
- Condoms can reduce your risk of getting genital herpes if used correctly (see other side for instructions) every single time you have sex.
- Washing the genitals, urinating, or douching after sex will not prevent any STD.

## How is herpes treated?

- There is no cure for genital herpes, but there are treatments for its symptoms.
- You can only be tested for herpes if you have an active outbreak.
- Some medications can prevent blisters or make them go away faster.
- If you have several outbreaks in a year, a treatment called daily suppressive therapy can reduce your chance of passing the infection to your sex partners.

## What can I expect to happen if I have herpes?

- Though most times you will not have symptoms, if you do, you might have several outbreaks a year.
- You have a higher chance of getting HIV if you have unprotected sex with a partner living with HIV.
- If pregnant, in rare cases you could pass the infection to your baby. If you have active genital herpes, inform your doctor. When going into labor, the doctor may do a cesarean delivery (“c-section”).
- Be sure to tell your doctor if you or your partner has genital herpes.

## Most people who have herpes don't know it; often this STD has no symptoms.

- Herpes is a sexually transmitted virus that anyone who is sexually active can get.
- If you have symptoms, the most common ones are painful blisters and sores.
- You can pass herpes to others without knowing it, even when you don't have an outbreak or symptoms present.
- There is no cure for herpes, but there are treatments for the symptoms.
- You can have oral or genital herpes.