



Unneed2know
sexually transmitted infections

STI Information Sheet Herpes Simplex I & II

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Herpes Simplex I & II



What is Herpes Simplex I & II?

Infection with herpes simplex virus (HSV), known as herpes, is common worldwide. Type 1 (HSV-1) is typically transmitted by oral-to-oral contact and causes infection in or around the mouth (oral herpes), but it can also cause genital herpes. Type 2 (HSV-2) is mainly sexually transmitted and causes genital herpes. Both variants remain in your body for life and may re-occur on occasion.



How do you get Herpes Simplex I & II?

Mouth cold sores (HSV-1) is mainly transmitted via contact with the virus in sores, saliva or surfaces in or around the mouth. Less commonly, HSV-1 can be transmitted to the genital area through oral-genital contact to cause genital herpes. It can be transmitted from oral or skin surfaces that appear normal; however, the greatest risk of transmission is when there are active sores. People who already have HSV-1 are not at risk of reinfection, but they are still at risk of acquiring HSV-2.

Genital herpes (HSV 2) is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) passed on through vaginal, anal and oral sex. Symptoms clear up on their own but can come back.

Symptoms



Oral herpes infection is mostly asymptomatic, but symptoms can include painful blisters or open sores (ulcers) in or around the mouth (cold sores). Infected persons will often experience a tingling, itching or burning sensation around their mouth before the appearance of sores. These symptoms can recur periodically, and the frequency varies from person to person.



Genital herpes can be asymptomatic or have mild symptoms that go unrecognized. When symptoms occur, genital herpes is characterised by one or more genital or anal blisters or ulcers. Genital herpes caused by HSV-1 typically does not recur frequently. With HSV-2, recurrent symptoms are common. However, recurrences are often less severe than the first episode and tend to decrease over time.



Treatment

A pharmacist can recommend:

- Creams to ease pain and irritation.
- Antiviral medicines or creams to speed up healing time.
- Cold sore patches to protect the skin while it heals.



Preventing Herpes Simplex I & II

People with symptoms of oral herpes should avoid oral contact with others (including oral sex) and sharing objects that touched saliva. Individuals with symptoms of genital herpes should abstain from sexual activity while experiencing symptoms. Both HSV-1 and HSV-2 are most contagious when sores are present, but can also be transmitted when no symptoms are felt or visible.