

MANAGING YOUR GENITAL HERPES

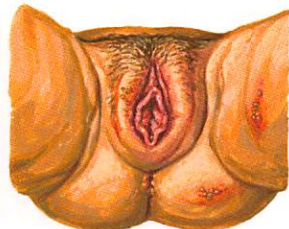
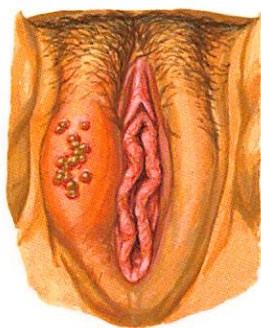
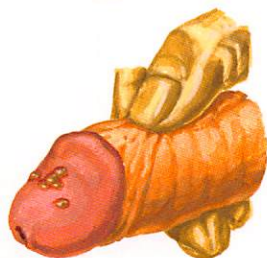


Genital herpes is a very contagious infection, and most people become infected through sex. There is no cure for genital herpes and breakouts vary from person to person.

Types of herpes simplex virus



Type 1 causes mouth blisters or cold sores (can also infect genital area).



Type 2 causes lesions the in genital area. Condoms are not 100% protective against infection because lesions can break out on buttocks and thighs.

What Is Genital Herpes?

Genital herpes is a very contagious infection caused by the herpes simplex virus, or HSV. There are two types of HSV, type 1 and type 2. Type 1 usually causes mouth blisters or cold sores but can also infect the genital area. Type 2 causes most genital herpes cases.

How Is Genital Herpes Transmitted?

Most people get genital herpes from having sex with someone who is infected. The virus settles in a nerve in the body and remains there permanently. Condoms are not a complete barrier because the virus and lesions can also be on thighs and buttocks.

What Are the Symptoms of Genital Herpes?

Many people never have symptoms and don't know that they have herpes until the first outbreak. Symptoms of a first outbreak may include pain and itching in the lip or genital area. Sometimes, during a first outbreak, there may be a feeling of pressure in the abdomen, discharge from the vagina, headache, fever, and difficulty urinating. The first outbreak is the longest and most painful. It may last several days.

HSV starts as small red bumps, which develop into blisters. These blisters become painful open sores. After several days, the sores crust and in time disappear completely. About 50% of people who have a first outbreak of herpes will have more blisters. These outbreaks are usually milder and shorter and usually end in 7 to 10 days. Symptoms vary, so some people may have only one or two outbreaks in a lifetime, but others may have several per year. The cause of repeated outbreaks is unclear. Emotional stress, fatigue, illness, and menstruation may trigger them. As time goes on, the number of outbreaks usually decreases.