

# Genital Herpes Fact Sheet

HSV (Herpes Simplex Virus), caused by type 1 (HSV-1) and type 2 (HSV-2), is the most common cause of genital ulcers in the United States. Generally, genital herpes infections are caused by HSV-2.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

In primary and recurrent infections, most people are asymptomatic (without symptoms) or exhibit mild signs or symptoms. If symptoms occur, the first outbreak usually occurs within two weeks after the virus is transmitted.

Symptoms in women include:

- Vaginal discharge
- Itching
- Anal irritation
- Blisters on or around the genital area or rectum
- Infections of the mouth or lips “fever blisters”
- Flu-like symptoms (fever and swollen glands)

Symptoms in men include:

- Discharge from penis
- Painful or difficult urination
- Penile (head) swelling and soreness
- Anal irritation
- Blisters on or around the genital area or rectum
- Infections of the mouth or lips “fever blisters”
- Flu-like symptoms (fever and swollen glands)

## TRANSMISSION

Herpes Simplex virus infections are transmitted through:

- Transfer of saliva
- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex (HSV-2)
- Oral-genital, oral-anal, and anal-genital contact
- Infected mother to newborn during vaginal child-birth

## COMPLICATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

If untreated, HSV infections may result in:

- Recurrent painful genital sores
- Increased risk for acquiring HIV infection
- Increased infectivity in HIV-infected individuals

If untreated in pregnancy, HSV can lead to:

- Fatal infections in newborns

## PREVENTION

- Abstain from sexual contact
- Latex condoms may not reduce risk of genital herpes if infected area or site of potential exposure is not covered
- Avoidance of sexual contact with an infected partner

Recommendations for prohibiting the spread of infection:

If untreated, HSV infections may result in:

- Screening test during pregnancy
- Notify all recent sex partners if infected

## TREATMENT

There is no cure for herpes, but antiviral medications can shorten and prevent outbreaks. Medication should be prescribed by a health care provider. Commonly, Acyclovir, Famciclovir, Valacyclovir are used for first and recurrent episodes, as well as suppressive therapy.

### Contact Information:

For more information pertaining to Florida clinical services, sites, and treatment recommendations please visit us on the web at [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/std/clinical/clinical.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/std/clinical/clinical.html) or email us at: [HSD\\_STD@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:HSD_STD@doh.state.fl.us).

### National STD Hotline

1-800-227-8922 (24 hrs, 7 days a week)

### Spanish

1-800-344-7432 (8am-2pm EST, 7 days a week)

### Hearing Impaired

1-800-243-7889 (10am-10pm EST, Mon.-Fri.)