



What is herpes simplex?

- A disease of the skin and mucous membranes caused by herpes simplex virus 1 (HSV-1) or herpes simplex virus 2 (HSV-2). It occurs where the virus enters the body; cold sores on the mouth or face, or on the genitals.

What are symptoms that could occur?

- Some people are not aware of being infected
- First outbreak, fever and swollen glands followed by blisters that break and leave sores
- 'Fever-blister' or 'cold sore'
- Infected people can have several outbreaks a year but lessen over time

How is it spread?

- By direct skin-to-skin contact with blisters
- Does NOT spread by toilet seats, telephones or whirlpools

How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Primary care provider evaluation and laboratory testing, if necessary
- There is no cure for herpes, but there are anti-viral medications that will decrease severity and frequency of recurrences

How can herpes simplex be prevented?

- Abstain from sexual activity or be in a long-term monogamous relationship
- Use latex condoms for all other sexual activity, understanding a latex condom is no guarantee of protection from herpes or any other sexually transmitted disease
- Persons with herpes should abstain from sexual activity with uninfected partners when lesions are visible
- It is important to know that even if you do not have any symptoms you can still infect your sex partner
- Avoid contacting/kissing anyone with blisters

Are there complications?

- A baby may be infected at birth if mother is positive, tell your doctor about your infection
- Blindness may occur if herpes reaches the eyes
- Herpes sores increase the risk of getting other sexually transmitted diseases

What can you do if you are having an outbreak?

- Wash hands thoroughly after touching sores
- DO NOT intentionally break the blisters and DO NOT apply antibacterial creams or ointments without your doctor's advice
- Wear loose-fitting clothing, avoid pantyhose, tight slacks and jeans
- Avoid sexual contact

Should the sick individual be isolated?

- No. There is no need to isolate children or adults with herpes simplex infections

Should facilities do special cleaning?

- Special cleaning is not necessary. Routine cleaning with EPA approved products is recommended

If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-1017