

If you think you may have genital herpes

You can go to a sexual health clinic for a check up. You can ring for an appointment or sometimes drop in. At the clinic staff may be able to tell if you have genital herpes just by looking at the blisters. Sometimes they can test if you have a blister. If you have genital herpes you may be given tablets to help you get better quicker. The tablets can also make the blisters less painful.

For names and addresses of sexual health clinics call:

Sexwise 0800 28 29 30
Sexual Health Information Line 0800 567 123
NHS Direct 0845 4647

Or check out www.ruthinking.co.uk and www.playingsafely.co.uk

Sexual health clinics are free and confidential. Staff cannot tell anyone you have visited the clinic without your permission unless they believe you or someone else is in serious danger. Try telling your boyfriend or girlfriend if you think you have herpes. If you do have herpes it's very important you tell them so you both get treatment.

Questions you should ask at the clinic

At the clinic, the staff want to make sure you get the best treatment possible. So when you are at the clinic you should always ask the nurse or doctor:

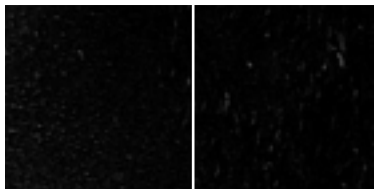
- 1 – what is wrong with me?
- 2 – what do I need to do?
- 3 – why should I do it?

Their answers will help you to know what to do to get better and stay healthy.

If you want to know more about genital herpes or want any further help and advice about sex or sexual health call **Sexwise 0800 28 29 30**.

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NHS

chase your life

You need to know ALL about GENITAL HERPES

Information and advice

NHS

Health First

Herpes is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in the UK.

You can get herpes through having sex.

Herpes is caused by a virus.

One type of herpes virus is called Herpes simplex 1 and is known as the cold sore virus. Another type of herpes virus is called Herpes simplex 2.

Both these viruses can give you sores around your mouth (cold sores) or around your genitals (penis or vagina). However Herpes simplex 2 is the virus that usually gives you genital herpes.

Both men and women can get herpes.

The virus that causes herpes cannot be cured. It stays in your body. However, lots of people live with the virus in their body and it does not cause any big health problems.

If you have genital herpes you might get these signs or symptoms:

- men can get a tingling feeling, blisters and a pain around their penis and testicles (balls) or around their anus (bumhole)
- women can get a tingling feeling, blisters and a pain around their vagina, vulva (lips of the vagina) or anus
- the blisters can become sores or ulcers
- men and women can get pain when passing urine
- men and women can feel like they have a very bad cold, usually the first time they get herpes

All these signs and symptoms go after a few weeks. The virus stays in your body so sometimes these symptoms come back.

You can get herpes and not notice the symptoms because they are so mild. This means you may not know you have got herpes.

The herpes virus can stay in your body and live quietly for many years. You can give the virus to your sexual partner without knowing it. This can happen even after you have been going out with them for a long time and have not had sex with anyone else during this time.

How do you catch genital herpes?

You can catch genital herpes by having sex with someone who already has the herpes virus.

You can catch it by having vaginal, anal and oral sex. You can also catch it by rubbing closely against the other person's skin around their genitals during sex.



You can catch genital herpes if someone is giving you oral sex and they have a cold sore around their mouth.

You can get more than one sexually transmitted infection at the same time.

How do I protect myself against genital herpes?

Using a condom will help protect you against genital herpes.

When you use a condom remember to:

- not use a condom that is past its 'use by' date, which is written on the packet
- only use condoms that have this on the side  
- use a new condom each time you have sex
- put a condom on before your genitals (penis and vagina) touch

Condoms come in all shapes and sizes, so find the best one for you. Condoms can help protect you from most sexually transmitted infections and help to avoid pregnancy.

