

Sex & Prevention

Remember – a germ is just a germ. Germs spread wherever and whenever they can. Sex can spread germs, but it **does not cause** herpes. Germs cause herpes.

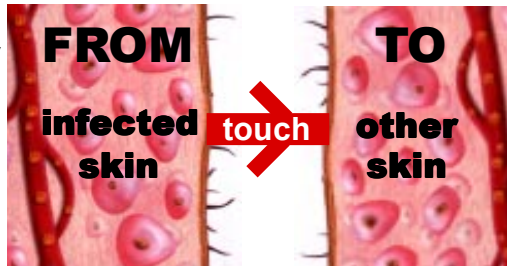
What is Herpes?

Herpes is a skin infection caused by **two types** of Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV). The first type (HSV-1) causes ‘cold sores’ on the mouth, but can also infect other areas including the genitals. The second type (HSV-2) causes painful sores on or around the genitals, but can also infect other areas including the mouth. Both can be spread by sexual contact, but they are different infections with different symptoms.

How is it spread?

Both types of herpes spread by **direct contact** (touching) of infected skin or mucous membrane (the ‘skin’ inside the mouth, vagina [*pussy*] or rectum [*inside the ass*]). HSV-2 usually spreads just before or during an outbreak of sores.

- Vulva, vagina or cervix [*inside or outside pussy*].
- Penis or testicles [*dick or balls*].
- Mouth or lips.
- Anus or rectum [*inside/outside ass*].
- Other skin



ANYWHERE on a sex partner or other places on the infected person

Can it be prevented?

Yes it can. Prevention means **reducing your risk** of getting herpes. You can avoid coming into contact with herpes by NOT having direct contact with infected skin just before or during an outbreak of sores.



Using condoms will reduce your risk of coming into contact with herpes, but **parts of the body not covered may not be protected** (scrotum [*balls*], lips of vulva [*pussy*]). The female condom covers a larger area and may protect more of the genitals.

What are its symptoms?

Symptoms of herpes may show 2 to 3 weeks after infection, or not for many years. **Don't assume you got herpes from your most recent sex partner!** HSV-2 infection is generally more severe than HSV-1 infection, causing clusters of small red bumps to appear in the following places:

most recent sex partner. HSV-2 infection is generally more severe than HSV-1 infection, causing clusters of small red bumps to appear in the following places:

- o on the vulva or inside the vagina [*pussy*],
- o on the penis [*dick*] or on the scrotum [*balls*],
- o on the perineum (the skin between vagina [*pussy*] and anus or between scrotum [*balls*] and anus).
- o near the anus or in the rectum [*outside/inside the ass*],
- o on or inside the mouth, or any other skin.

The bumps burst open and become painful sores. These dry out, leaving yellow or grey scabs that fall off after a while. After the sores go away (usually 2 to 4 weeks), the virus hides and sleeps, but could be set off again at any time. Outbreaks may come back about 4 times a year, but this is different for everybody.



Can it be treated?

Yes it can. Eating well, exercising and lots of rest will keep your immune system strong and may fight off new outbreaks. There is no way to cure the infection, but anti-viral drugs may be prescribed to shorten and lessen the pain of outbreaks.



Be careful not to spread the virus to other parts of your own body (for example, touching the sores, and then your eyes or mouth).

How can I tell if I have it?

Herpes is often diagnosed by the way the sores look. Because many other sores can look the same as herpes sores, the only way to know for sure is to have a swab taken from a sore and tested for the herpes virus. There is no way to test for herpes unless sores are visible on the skin.

Let's Have a Look... Getting Tested

When you go to a doctor or nurse to get tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), give as many details as you can so you can get the best care possible. This is what will **probably** happen:

- o Your genitals may be examined for sores, growths, swelling or discharge [*stuff coming out*]. A swab may be taken from any sores. (A swab is like a thin Q-tip.)
- o Men may have a swab taken from the urethra. Women

- o Your genitals may be examined for sores, growths, swelling or discharge [*stuff coming out*]. A swab may be taken from any sores. (A swab is like a thin Q-tip.)
- o Men may have a swab taken from the urethra. Women may have a swab taken from the cervix. Swabs may also be taken from your mouth, throat, anus or rectum [*inside/outside the ass*].
- o A urine [*pee*] sample may be asked for.
- o A blood sample may be taken to test for Hepatitis B and syphilis. HIV testing is usually done separately.



What About HIV?

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is a sexually transmitted infection (STI). It is spread when infected blood, semen or vaginal fluid gets into your blood. If you already have an STI such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes or genital warts, you may have broken skin, swelling or sores that make it **easier for HIV to get into your body.**

clip/rip & save

Where can I go?

You can get tested for Hepatitis, HIV and STIs at your doctor's office, or contact one of the health agencies below for confidential testing services:

- **Klinik** – 870 Portage Ave. – 784-4078 – Drop-in Teen Clinic every Saturday from 12 to 4 p.m.
- **Women's Health Clinic** – 419 Graham St. – 947-1517 – Drop-in Teen Clinic every Thursday from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. (Boys are welcome!)
- **Nor'West Coop** – 103-61 Tyndall Ave. – 633-5955 – Drop-in Teen Clinic every Wednesday from 1 to 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **Mount Carmel Clinic** – 886 Main St. – 582-2311 – Ask to speak to "Triage".
- **Health Action Centre** – 425 Elgin St. – 947-1626 – Ask to speak to a nurse.
- **Hope Centre** – 480 Alfred – 589-8354 – Drop-in HIV testing is available.
- **St. James Walk-in Clinic** – 1600 Portage – 774-1868 – Open 'til 11 p.m. every day! Across the street from Polo Park.
- **Street Connections** – 50 Argyle St. – 943-6379 – Nurse available for women and transsexuals only.
- **Community Health Clinic** – 601 Aikins – 940-2025 – Call for appointment.
- **Village Clinic** – 705 Broadway Ave. – 940-6001 – Call for appointment.