

Genital Herpes Basics & Transmission

Herpes is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and is caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV). Symptoms can appear in 2 to 21 days, and can cause blisters on, around, or in your genitals, anus, rectum, mouth, or eyes. Lots of people with herpes have no symptoms, or they mistake the symptoms for something else. The Mesa Mobile Outreach Team can connect you with care for STIs! Your health matters and we offer safe and compassionate care.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF HERPES

- Blisters, individually or in clusters, around the genitals or anus
- Itchy, tingly, burning or painful skin in affected areas
- Pain in the legs or buttocks
- Watery discharge from the vagina
- Swollen lymph nodes in the groin

HOW IS HERPES TRANSMITTED?

- ✓ Kissing with tongue if someone has sores on their lips or in their mouth.
- ✓ Giving or receiving oral sex, including anilingus, if one partner has sores on their lips or in their mouth.
- ✓ Through sexual intercourse, including penis-vagina and penis-anus.
- ✓ Through sharing sex toys or during a hand job or fingering if fluids get onto the toy or hand.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT HERPES?

- ✓ Avoid kissing if you or your partners have sores on your lips or mouth, or if one of you has an active oral infection, like a herpes outbreak.
- ✓ To reduce the risk during oral sex, including anilingus, cover your partners genitals or anus with an oral dam or a condom.
- ✓ Use a condom during any sexual intercourse.
- ✓ Wash sex toys with soap before and after each use. Use a new condom on inserted toys. Use a condom or an oral dam between skin and vibrators.



ASK THE MESA MOBILE OUTREACH TEAM FOR SAFER SEX SUPPLIES!

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT HERPES?

- For people with HIV, herpes may increase the amount of HIV in bodily fluids and could increase the chance of passing on HIV.**
- The only way to know if you have herpes is to get tested. Connect with the Mesa Mobile Outreach Team about how to get tested!**
- There is no vaccine to protect against genital herpes or herpes simplex virus, or a cure for it.**
- If you have herpes, talk to the Mesa Mobile Outreach Team about treatments and how to manage herpes.**

TREATMENT OF HERPES



If you have herpes, talk to your nurse or doctor, or connect with the Mesa Mobile Outreach Team to talk about treatment. It should be covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)!

While there is no cure for herpes, there are ways that it can be managed! Antiviral medications can help to prevent outbreaks, reduce your symptoms during an outbreak and reduce the chances of passing herpes to a partner.

If you have an outbreak, you can take over-the-counter pain medication, apply ice packs to any lesions, take a warm bath with salt or baking soda, and wear loose-fitting cotton underwear to help reduce pain or irritation.

Connect with the Mesa Mobile Outreach Team about confidential testing and treatment. No judgement here!



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**Looking to connect with the Mesa Mobile Outreach Team?
 Call 1-877-819-4181 (toll-free!)
 Renfrew County District Health Unit provides STI testing.**

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