



Genital Herpes

What is genital herpes (jenital her-pees)?

Genital herpes is a sexually transmissible infection (STI).

Genital herpes is quite common.

We need to get informed about genital herpes so we can stop people in our community from getting it.

How do you get herpes?

You can get genital herpes when you have vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has genital herpes and you don't use a condom.

Herpes can be spread by any sort of contact with the skin of someone who has the infection, especially when they have blisters or sores.

Babies sometimes get herpes from their mother during birth. If you are pregnant and you've had herpes, tell the clinic so they can make sure any sores are treated before the baby is born.

Symptoms – how would I know if I have genital herpes?

Genital herpes causes blisters or sores around the penis, vagina, anus or mouth. These can be painful or tingly. The blisters appear a few days after infection. The sores heal over but will keep coming back. Sometimes people get aches and pain (like flu) and feel depressed or a bit moody soon after getting herpes.

Some people who have genital herpes get no symptoms or signs at all. This means you can have genital herpes and not know it.

The only way of knowing whether you have herpes is to get tested.



Testing for genital herpes

Testing for genital herpes is simple and done at the clinic.

You can get tested for genital herpes as part of your men's or women's health check – just ask.

The test is done in private. Usually a swab is taken from the sores. Sometimes a blood test is needed too.

Get tested for STIs at least every six to 12 months.

Don't be shame

Testing regularly for STIs means you're looking after your health and respecting your partners. If more people in our community test regularly for STIs, and get treated, everyone is better off.

Test results are confidential. Your partner will not be told about your result without your permission. No one else in your family or community will be told about your result without your permission.

What's the treatment for genital herpes?

There is no cure for genital herpes. But there are tablets to help with blisters and outbreaks. Ice packs, salt baths and paracetamol (such as Panadol) can help too.

What if I don't get treated?

If you have genital herpes and don't get treated, you'll get sores more often – maybe every few weeks – with worse outbreaks when you are stressed.

Your doctor can help you keep blisters from getting worse and reduce the time you have sores.

Treating the blisters and sores means that you're less likely to pass herpes on to your partner.



Condoms can stop STIs from spreading. Here's how to use a condom:

- ⦿ Check expiry date, check the package is not damaged and open with care
- ⦿ Pinch the tip so air doesn't get trapped
- ⦿ Roll on when the penis is hard
- ⦿ Use water-based lubricant (lube). Oil based lubricant can damage the condom
- ⦿ When withdrawing, hold the base of the condom so semen (cum) doesn't spill out
- ⦿ Tie a knot in the used condom and put it in the bin. Not down the toilet as it will block the pipes.

Let's look after our health and get tested for STIs. If we all test and get treated, we can stop the spread of STIs in our community.