

Genital Herpes

Most people who have genital herpes do not know they have it.

Signs and Symptoms

- *Most people only have mild symptoms or symptoms they do not think could be herpes.*
- If symptoms occur, they usually begin within 1-2 weeks of infection.
- Blisters in the genital or anal area
- Genital or anal itching or irritation
- Pain or trouble peeing
- Swelling and soreness in genital area
- Cuts or sores in genitals or anal area
- Flu-like symptoms (fever, sore throat, swollen glands)

Transmission

- Oral, anal or vaginal sex
- Infected mother to baby at vaginal birth

Prevention

- Abstain from oral, anal and vaginal sex.
- Use condoms/barriers consistently and correctly during oral, anal or vaginal sex.
- Maintain a mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested for herpes and is not infected.
- Get early treatment for STDs.
- If someone has herpes, taking medication daily can reduce the risk of giving it to partners; however, this is not 100% effective.

Treatment

- See a health care provider for exam and tests to figure out the best treatment.
- There is no cure for herpes. Anti-viral medicines can prevent and shorten outbreaks. Medicine may lower the risk of giving herpes to others.

If Not Treated

- Can increase risk for getting HIV
- Recurrent, painful genital sores
- Infections in newborns if not treated during pregnancy

If You have Genital Herpes

- Refrain from sex (oral, anal or vaginal sex) if there are symptoms.
- Learn about herpes and get support from local groups or websites.
- Use condoms/barriers consistently and correctly during oral, anal or vaginal sex.
- Seek medical care including STD tests. Discuss the best course of treatment with a health care provider.
- Notify recent sex partners that they were exposed to herpes and talk to all new partners about it.
- Consider taking medication to prevent giving herpes to others.
- If pregnant, get tested for STDs and HIV.

For more information about STDs
or for getting tested and treated,
visit our web site...

www.kingcounty.gov/health/std

Public Health
Seattle & King County

