Herpes viruses

The herpes simplex virus, also known as HSV, is a viral infection that causes genital and oral herpes. Many people live with asymptomatic HSV, which means they have the virus without ever having an outbreak or active episode of herpes. Others might experience occasional episodes of small, fluid-filled blisters or sores. These blisters most commonly appear on the genitals or mouth and lips, but they can also show up on hands or fingers and other parts of your body. Herpesvirus genomes consist of linear, double-stranded DNA

There are two main types of the herpes simplex virus: HSV-1 and HSV-2.

HSV-1. This type primarily causes oral herpes, characterized by cold sores or fever blisters that appear around your mouth or on your face.

HSV-2. This primarily causes genital herpes, which involves sores that appear on or around your genitals, anus, buttocks, and inner thighs. Sores can also develop inside the vagina.

HSV-1

You can transmit or contract HSV-1, or oral herpes, through direct contact with a herpes sore, saliva, or other bodily secretions during an episode. If you're shedding the virus, someone can contract it through direct contact with the site of the infection.

Examples of direct contact include:

1. kissing
2. oral sex
3. other skin-to-skin contact

In other words, if you touch a partner's cold sore and then touch your own face or genitals shortly afterward, you could contract the virus. Many children contract the virus after being kissed or touched on the face by an adult with a cold sore.

HSV-2

As with HSV-1, you can transmit or contract HSV-2, or genital herpes, through direct contact with a herpes sore, saliva, or other bodily secretions during an episode. HSV-2 can also be transmitted during viral shedding.

Direct contact might include:

1. kissing
2. oral sex
3. sharing sex toys during a sexual encounter
4. penetrative sex
5. other skin-to-skin contact at the infection site

Who is at risk for developing herpes simplex infections?

Anyone can contract HSV, regardless of age. If you're exposed to HSV, you're likely to contract the virus.

Can the virus be transmitted during childbirth?

According to 2021 research Trusted Source, about 1 in every 1,000 babies born in the United States develop neonatal HSV.

Symptoms of herpes

1. fever
2. swollen lymph nodes
3. body aches and pains, including headache
4. unusual tiredness or fatigue
5. lack of appetite
6. shooting pain at the site of the infection

How is herpes simplex diagnosed?

1. swabbing fluid from the sore and sending it to a laboratory for testing.
2. blood test can determine whether you have HSV antibodies.
3. You can also test yourself for HSV antibodies with an at-home testing kit. Compare at-home herpes tests.