

Genital herpes sexually transmitted disease

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Genital Herpes Sexually Transmitted Disease

Genital Herpes is a sexually transmitted infection affecting the genital area of human body. It is a contagious disease caused by herpes simplex virus type 1 or 2 (HSV-1 or HSV-2) of the family Herpesviridae. According to WHO and CDC, genital herpes is more common in United States with 45 million people infected and about 500, 000 cases seen every year. Transmission of infection from male to female occurs more easily and is more prevalent in women than men. Pregnant women with infection can pass it on to babies, around 3000-10, 000 infected babies are born every year (Marshall Cavendish, 364). One out of six people of 14 - 49 years of age have the infection.

Herpes virus is transmitted by individuals who are unaware of their infection and shed the virus by sexual or oral-sexual contact. It is transmitted by the mucous membranes or damaged skin in the genital area or around mouth to the nerve cells where it stays for life (Susan Scott Ricci, Terri Kyle, 154).

Some patients show preliminary signs of infection that is severe and painful within 5 - 7 days of HSV exposure during which the virus replicates and later develops lesions that appear as clusters of tiny bumps filled with clear fluid (Sandra Alters, Wendy Schiff, 404). Patients then experience later recurrences that are milder, while some patients have no signs of infection due to the dormant state of virus.

First symptoms of genital herpes are visible sores, lesions and blisters visible in and around vagina, cervix, penis, testicles, mouth etc. causing discomfort and pain followed by fever, muscle pain, headache, painful urination and swollen lymph nodes. Other complications caused by genital herpes are: Aseptic meningitis is illness due to inflammation of brain linings (Gerd E.

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Gross, 224).

Recurrent Lymphocytic Meningitis (RLM) characterized by sudden onset of aseptic meningitis recovery and recurrence.

Photophobia

Sacral radiculomyelitis may occur in both men and women due to urinary retention.

Transverse myelitis a neurological syndrome caused by inflammation of spinal cord.

Eye infection

Erythema multiforme a skin disorder caused due to infection or allergic reaction.

Pneumonitis an inflammation of lung tissues etc.

Herpes gladiatorum (epidemic herpes in wrestlers) (Stephen J. McPhee, Maxine A. Papadakis, 114)

The virus hides in the cells of nervous system during the dormant state and is invisible to drugs or the immune system which makes it difficult to cure.

Hence there is no cure for genital herpes and the only best treatment is prevention, however, antiviral medications can treat the outbreaks, shedding and recurrence. Oral medications like Acyclovir (Zovirax), Famciclovir (Famvir) or Valacyclovir (Valtrex) prevent the virus replication (Jerrold S. Greenberg, 574). These medications possess certain severe, moderate and mild side effects like diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, joint pains, high BP, rapid heartbeat, speech problem, fatigue, painful periods, etc (James Balch, 247).

Ways to prevent the genital herpes are:

Having a safe and long term sexual relation with uninfected partner

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Use of condoms would reduce the risk as the partner might be asymptomatic.

Avoid touching other body parts after touching the sores or blisters.

Regular hand wash during the outbreaks would lead to quicker recovery.

Pregnant infected women should avoid vaginal delivery during outbreak.

Avoid stress and relax more to decrease the recurrence.

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