

What is Herpes?

- Herpes is a virus that can give you sores or blisters. It does not cause any other health problems.
- There are 2 types of herpes. This virus can give you sores or blisters near your mouth. These are often called cold sores. The virus can also give you sores or blisters near your genitals.
- Most people do not have any signs of herpes.
- **Herpes is very common, 1 in every 6 people have herpes.**



How do people get herpes?

- You can get herpes from having sex with someone who has herpes. This includes sex in the vagina, mouth or anus (butt). You can also get herpes by touching genitals to genitals, even if you didn't have sex.
- You can get cold sores from kissing someone who has them.
- Anyone can get herpes.

How can I avoid getting herpes?

- Herpes is passed through skin-to-skin contact so you can still pass herpes from the area not covered by the condom. Using condoms can reduce your risk of giving herpes to someone else but does not remove the risk.
- Do not have sex (vaginal, oral or anal) when you have an outbreak.

How do I know if I have herpes?

- When people do have signs of herpes, they will have an “outbreak”. These are sores or blisters on their vulva, anus, penis, pubic bone or thighs. They can also be on their lips, and inside their mouth or nose. These sores might hurt.
- Many people have more outbreaks the first year. After the first year outbreaks happen less often and are shorter. Many people stop getting outbreaks completely.

Can I get tested for herpes?

- If you have a sore or blister that you think is herpes, your doctor can swab it with a Q-Tip and test you for herpes.
- If you have no symptoms, there is a blood test but we do not recommend it. The test is not reliable and can just make you worry.

Is there medicine for herpes?

- Yes, there is medicine for herpes. But people do not need to take medicine all the time.
- Your doctor can give you medicine to take before you have an outbreak.

If my partner has herpes does that mean I do too?

- No. You can get herpes the first time you have sex with someone who has it. Or you can have sex with someone who has herpes 100 times and not get it.

To learn more about herpes, talk to your CHN health educator: