

# Cold Sores

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### Overview

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### What is the cause of a cold sore?

Cold sores are caused by the Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) which comes in two forms. The first type is HSV1 and is the cause of most cases of cold sores. The second type is HSV2 which usually affects the genital area and leads to genital herpes. Cross-infection of these two types is possible due to oral or genital sexual practices.

### How do you get a cold sore?

The HSV spreads easily from one person to another. Sharing a fork, lip balm, coffee mug, straw, etc. can easily infect a person without the virus. Transmission may also occur when the infected person touches the sores and has held on to other objects touched by other people.

### **What are the symptoms of a cold sore?**

It is possible that the first infection does not show any symptoms, but it could be triggered at a later time. The symptoms may differ depending on whether it is the patient's first time, but it may include the following:

- Painful blisters on the lips, mouth, nose or throat
- Mouth and throat pain
- Swelling in the neck
- Fever, body aches and ill feeling

### **Are there tests available to diagnose cold sores?**

The doctor can do a swab test to confirm the presence of a cold sore. However, the appearance of the lesions is enough for the doctor to diagnose it.

### **What treatments are available for cold sores?**

Cold sores usually get better over the course of one to one and a half week. Painkillers or topical gels may be used to relieve the pain and discomfort. Some oral antiviral medication or antiviral creams may be prescribed to alleviate the symptoms.

### **Can the HSV1 be removed from your system?**

Unfortunately, the HSV1 stays in your body once you have been infected. It can either remain dormant, or it could be triggered.