

### What is it?

Herpes is a common sexually transmitted infection caused by the herpes simplex virus. As many as one in eight people have herpes. Symptoms include recurring genital pain and sores.

While there is no cure for herpes, treatment helps to manage symptoms. The infection spreads through unprotected sex. It can also be passed from mother to baby during pregnancy and labour.

If you have herpes, it's important to get treated and learn more about your condition.

### What will my GP do?

#### Your GP may give you information about:

- Your treatment, including antiviral therapy – treatment helps reduce symptoms but doesn't 'cure' herpes
- Testing for other sexually transmitted infections
- Telling partners
- Safe-sex strategies
- Prevention and birth control
- Resources and support
- Treatment for related issues like pelvic inflammatory disease
- A referral for a counsellor or specialist if necessary

#### Your GP may recommend a referral if your symptoms are extensive, or if you are:

- Unsure about your diagnosis
- Pregnant
- Diabetic
- HIV positive

### What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may see you again in one week to monitor your condition and check your response to treatment.

Your GP may also complete any tests that weren't done in your first check-up. You'll be given more support and advice for managing symptoms and flare-ups.

If you still have symptoms after your first episode, your GP will talk to you about therapies. There are different options based on how often your symptoms appear and how severe they are.

#### Your GP may also offer you a referral to a sexual health clinic if:

- You have herpes symptoms but your tests are negative
- Your condition is complicated
- You are immune suppressed
- You would like counselling or more support
- You have an inflammatory condition

### What questions should I ask my doctor?

- *What medicine do I need to take?*
- *How long do I need to take it for?*
- *How can I prevent spreading the disease?*
- *Am I at risk of any further complications?*
- *Will my family and friends find out?*
- *How will my relationships be affected?*
- *Where can I get more help and support?*



# Herpes

## What can I do?

It's important you follow your treatment instructions carefully so you can minimise flare-ups. Learn about safe sex and ask your GP if you need to tell previous partners about your disease.

Talk to your GP about strategies at home to ease symptoms, such as pain relief, saline soaks, ways to relieve painful urination.

It's common to feel anxious or worried when you learn you have herpes. Ask your GP for a referral if you'd like more support to help you cope.

## What supports are available?

### Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic

The Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic offers testing and diagnosis. As well as helping you with contact tracing, staff can help you manage and cope with your diagnosis.

You can either ask your GP to refer you or contact the clinic directly.

- Address: **Ground Floor, 13 Elizabeth Street, Liverpool**
- Phone: **9827 8022**

### Where can I learn more?

If you'd like to read more about herpes and sexual health, the following resource list can help:

- **Health Direct** - genital herpes: [healthdirect.gov.au](http://healthdirect.gov.au)
- **Health Translations** - genital herpes: [healthtranslations.vic.gov.au](http://healthtranslations.vic.gov.au)
- **Family Planning Australia**: phone **1300 658 886** or visit [fpnsw.org.au](http://fpnsw.org.au)
- **NSW Sexual Health InfoLink**: phone **1800 451 624** or visit [shil.nsw.gov.au](http://shil.nsw.gov.au)
- **Sydney Sexual Health Centre** - online assessment tool: [sshc.org.au](http://sshc.org.au)

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

**phn**  
SOUTH WESTERN  
SYDNEY

An Australian Government Initiative