

The Forever Infection

Herpes is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that affects one out of every five Americans over the age of twelve. It is a very painful condition that comes and goes — but it never goes away.

There is no cure for herpes. It spreads very easily from one partner to another because it shows few or no outward signs. Ninety percent of infected people don't even know they have herpes!

Herpes Statistics

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/stats



Why Gay Men Are at Risk

Herpes cases have increased among men who have sex with men. Research shows that having herpes makes you more likely to get HIV, the virus that causes AIDS; having herpes and HIV also makes you more likely to spread AIDS to others.

Knowing how herpes is transmitted is the best way to avoid becoming infected. There is no cure. You need to learn about the infection and how to avoid it. It is critical to your health and the health of your partner.



For More Information

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for an extension of this pamphlet. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links.

Test your understanding with a quick quiz.

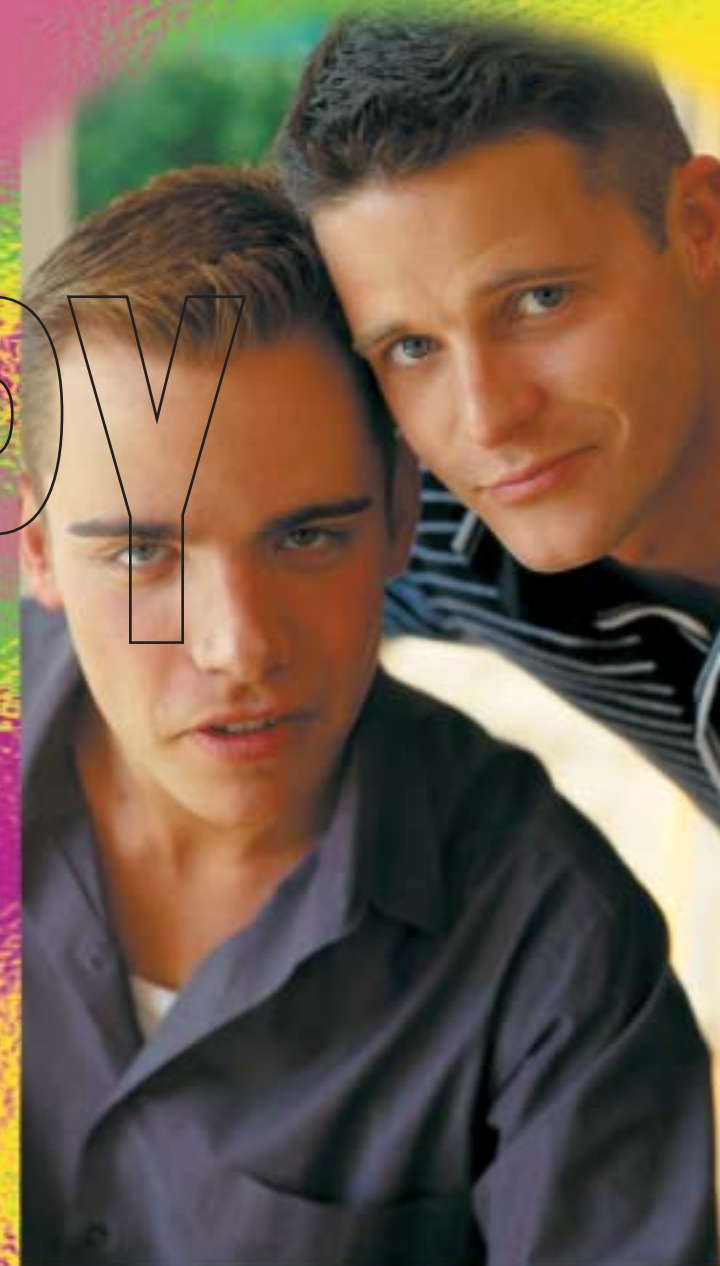


National STI Hotline:
(800) 227-8922

**Don't stay in
the dark.
Get In the Know!**

Herpes

*The forever
infection*



in the know

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The Two Types of Herpes

Type 1 herpes: This virus type infects areas above the waist, such as the mouth. Type 1 may be called “fever blisters.”

Type 2 herpes: This virus type usually infects the genital areas. It is formally known as *herpes genitalis*. Blisters, lesions or cuts may appear around the genital area, or other parts of the body like the thigh and buttocks.



The Four Stages of Herpes

Primary stage: This is when herpes is active and can spread easily. Any blisters or lesions will show during the primary stage and will last several days.

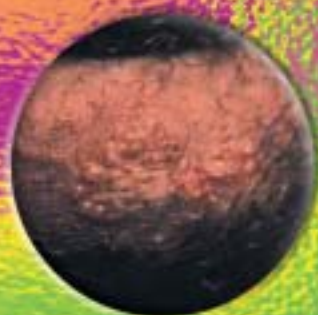
Latent stage: There are no outward signs or symptoms, and spreading herpes is unlikely.

Shedding stage: Infected people show no outward signs but can spread the virus. This stage occurs once a year.

Recurrent stage: Blisters and lesions appear on the body again. Usually these outbreaks are not as severe as the first stage (primary) and last fewer days.

How Herpes is Spread

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/spread



What Herpes Looks Like

Blisters are the most common sign of either type of herpes. The blisters contain a clear liquid that carries the virus. They are very painful. There may be other lesions that itch or burn as well. Infected people may also have a fever and feel very tired.

Infected men will have blisters or lesions on or around the penis. Women will have them in their cervix and vagina.

It may take anywhere between 2 and 20 days for signs of infection to show, with an average of 6 days.

Most infected people show no signs of having herpes at all. But they can still spread the virus.

Symptoms of Herpes

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/symptoms

Finding and Treating the Infection

Herpes is often diagnosed when signs and symptoms show up. The liquid from the blisters is tested for infection. Tests may also be taken from saliva, semen, blood or skin tissue.

There is no cure for herpes. Only the signs can be treated. Medications decrease the pain from blisters and how long they last, but herpes stays in the body forever.

Herpes Treatment

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/treatment



Why Herpes Can Lead to HIV

Anybody with a sexually transmitted infection is at higher risk of getting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The blisters or lesions caused by herpes are easy ways for HIV to enter the body.

Having unprotected sex, especially anal sex, increases your chances of being infected. Using a condom during vaginal, anal or oral sex, can help prevent the transmission of herpes and other STIs.

Ways to Avoid Herpes

People don't always know they are infected with herpes. So they may not know they are spreading the disease to others.

Not having any sexual contact is the best way to avoid infection. Using a condom can help prevent the spread of herpes. But it is not 100% effective. Sex without a condom is only safe when you and your uninfected partner only have sex with each other.



Follow These Tips to Stay Free of Infection

- Get to know your partner first
- Always wear a condom
- Make decisions about having sex when sober. Alcohol and drugs affect your ability to make sound decisions
- Get tested for herpes and other STIs at least once a year

Herpes Testing

www.intheknowzone.com/herpes/testing

Getting Tested is Important

Even if you feel fine and show no signs of herpes, getting tested is the only way to be sure. Remember, there is *no cure* for herpes.

You can get a test in a clinic, doctor's office, health department, or hospital. No one will know you are getting tested or the results of your test. Get tested at least once a year and have your partner get tested too.

