

TOPIC: GENITAL HERPES



Viral

TYPE:
Enveloped, double-stranded DNA virus.

CAUSE

Family: Human Herpesviruses (HHV), genus: *Simplexvirus*.
Genital herpes may be caused by ___ related viruses.

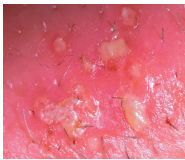
- ◆ HHV-2 usually causes _____ lesions (~50-85% of genital herpes cases).
- ◆ HHV-1 usually causes _____ lesions (~15-50% of genital herpes cases).
 - Can cause genital herpes via oral-genital contact.

SPREAD

Genital-to-genital contact (HHV-2) or oral-genital contact (HHV-1).

- ◆ Fluid-filled herpes lesions (vesicles) & mucous secretions are both infectious.
- ◆ _____ patients can spread herpes via secretions (e.g. semen).
- ◆ Condoms – limited protection.
 - Vesicles often located on areas ___ blocked by condom use.

SYMPTOMS

- ◆ Numerous small blisters around the genitals or rectum.
 - _____ pustule on reddened base.
 - Painful, but usually heal within _____.
 - May be absent, or mistaken for _____ skin irritation.  (SneSivan)
- ◆ _____ after a dormant period is common.
 - Typically triggered by events that weaken immune system (e.g. _____).
 - Occurs in ~80% of HHV-2 and ~50% HHV-1 cases.

DIAGNOSIS

Initial diagnosis by observing characteristic herpes lesions.
Herpesvirus DNA in blister fluid detected via ___ testing.

TREATMENT

Acyclovir: reduces symptoms, recurrences, & the risk of _____ – no cure.

IMMUNITY

N/A. Current research investigating vaccines ongoing.

References:

SneSivan. (n.d.) [Photograph of genital herpes blisters]. Shutterstock.

PRACTICE

True or False: If false, choose the answer that best corrects the statement:

Herpes infections caused by HHV-2 can be cured by treatment with acyclovir if caught early.

- a) True.
- b) False – only herpes infections caused by HHV-1 can be cured by acyclovir if caught early.
- c) False – all herpes infections can be cured by acyclovir regardless of when treatment starts.
- d) False – there is currently no cure for herpes; acyclovir may help reduce symptoms.

PRACTICE

Which of the following statements about herpes viruses is true?

- a) While typically associated with oral herpes infections, HHV-1 is now a significant cause of genital herpes infections.
- b) Both HHV-1 and HHV-2 typically recur about one or two times after the initial infection.
- c) The only way to differentiate between HHV-1 and HHV-2 is through culturing the virus.
- d) HHV-1 and HHV-2 can both cause genital lesions, but HHV-1 spreads by genital-to-genital contact more easily.

PRACTICE

Why do condoms provide limited protection against HHV-2 infection?

- a) HHV-2 is typically passed through oral to genital contact, and studies show people use condoms less regularly during oral sex.
- b) Pustules are located on the external genitals of females, which is not typically protected during condom use, and in males may be located in areas that a condom does not cover.
- c) Latex, the most common material used in condoms, is not an effective barrier against the herpes virus.
- d) Secondary herpes infection can involve highly infectious rashes in many other areas of the body besides the genitals.