

FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COLD SORES

- 1. Cold sores are caused by a virus** - specifically, the Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV). HSV type 1 will usually affect areas above the waist, more precisely on the face and around the mouth. Type 2 usually hits below the waist and is generally considered a sexually transmitted disease. Symptoms of HSV type 1 can include fever, sore throat and swollen glands, especially at the start of infection, The most recognizable symptom, of course, is the cold sore itself. Here are some characteristics of these sores – which some infected people are lucky enough to never get:
 - Tingling and burning is often present in the area 24-48 hours before the breakout.
 - Groups of small blisters around the mouth and on the lips will erupt; they begin clear and become cloudy.
 - After blisters appear, they will break open and leak a clear liquid, revealing bright red sores.
 - Sores will then crust over and disappear after several days - couple of weeks.
 - Cold sores may be quite painful.
- 2. They are contagious** - so pay attention when you're necking! HSV type 1 can be spread through contact with infected liquid, and so is often passed through contact with saliva, sharing of utensils or kissing. The virus is most contagious during times of active outbreak, but can potentially be spread even when the virus is dormant.
- 3. Cold sores are NOT canker sores** - even though the two share some of the same treatment options. Canker sores, unlike cold sores, will NOT appear on the outside of your mouth, and don't blister in the same way.
- 4. There is no cure** - sadly, once you've got it, you've got it. There is no known cure for HSV. This makes prevention especially important!
- 5. Speaking of, there are things you can do to prevent and treat breakouts!**

First and foremost, avoid interaction with infected fluids! This includes avoiding the sharing of utensils and food with anyone you know to be infected. If you do contract the virus, there are measures you can take to lessen the severity and frequency of breakouts, including:

- Regular use of sunscreen and lip balm: over-exposure to sun can increase your chance of breakout!
- Avoidance of other triggers that increase your frequency of cold sores: too much stress, flu, common colds, etc.
- Keeping the area clean: avoid touching the sore and wash your hands often!
- Over the counter treatments: Abreva, Zilactin and Johnson Compeed have all been very highly reviewed as effective treatments to shorten healing time and alleviate

discomfort. Abreva has been specifically approved by the FDA and supported by clinical trials for this purpose.

- Visiting your doctor for an anti-viral prescription to help lessen break out frequency. Common anti-virals for HSV include acyclovir (Zovirax), famciclovir (Famvir), and valacyclovir (Valtrex).
- To alleviate pain associated with the sores, try an oral pain relief gel such as Anbesol (<http://www.anbesol.com/>).