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# Treatment Of Oral And Genital Herpes

Although there is no cure for herpes, there are medications that significantly reduce the frequency and duration of outbreaks. These medications have few side effects in most people.

There are 3 prescriptive medications approved for the treatment of herpes. They work by interfering with DNA synthesis to prevent the virus from reproducing. The directions for each medication vary, so pay close attention to the frequency of taking the medication. Herpes treatment options include:

Acyclovir (Zovirax): This is the oldest and there is a generic of this medication so it is cheaper. Famcyclovir (Famvir)/Valacyclovir (Valtrex): There should be a generic of this medication in approximately one year.

All of these medications are effective in suppressing HSV 1 and HSV 2 and can be taken episodically or continuously.

#### Episodic therapy

This means taking the medication when you have an outbreak or feel a sore coming on. As soon as you feel a sore coming on, begin taking the antiviral medication. If you begin treatment soon enough, the drugs can lessen the severity and shorten the healing time.

You should take the antiviral medication episodically:

If you are not sexually active and have infrequent outbreaks  
If both partners are infected with genital herpes.

If you are both infected with the same virus, HSV 1 or HSV 2, in the genital area, you don't need to worry about giving it to each other. One or both of you may want to suppress if you are having frequent sores, but you don't have the responsibility to protect each other from getting the virus since you both already have the virus.

#### Suppressive therapy

You can take the medication continuously to prevent an outbreak or a sore. This is called suppressive therapy. We know that up to 70 percent of new cases of herpes are transmitted from someone showing no apparent symptoms at the time they infect their partner. This is called asymptomatic shedding of the virus. When taken suppressively, the drugs don't always prevent outbreaks, but help them to occur less frequently. In patients who have at least 6 outbreaks per year, suppressive therapy reduces the frequency by 70 percent to 80 percent. Many patients report no symptomatic outbreaks when using suppressive therapy.

You should take the antiviral medication:

If you have frequent sores  
If you have HSV 1 or 2 that and are sexually active with a non-infected partner  
If you have HSV 1 of the mouth and your partner has HSV 2 of the genital area, both of you would suppress to prevent exposing your partner to the another type of herpes

Once again, for optimal protection, it is important to use a condom or dental dam along with antiviral suppressive therapy.

#### Over-the-counter medications

Currently, there is no over-the-counter medication shown to be effective. The most frequently discussed OTC is L-lysine. Some people report favorable results but studies don't support L-lysine to be effective in preventing or shortening herpes outbreaks. If you do feel it helps, remember, you still have an obligation to protect your partner. L-lysine has not been shown to be protective for your partner. For now, you will need prescription medication to protect your partner.

#### Symptom relief

If your genital symptoms are bothersome to severe, here are a few tips to help relieve these discomforts:

Wear loose clothing. Wear cotton underwear. Urinate in the tub or pour water over the genitals while urinating. Use a drying agent in your tub water. You can sprinkle cornstarch lightly on your genitals while in the tub. Soak twice a

day for 15 minutes. Tannic acid found in black tea has been found to reduce itching and pain. Place a moist tea bag over the sore. Ice packs to the lesion may be soothing.

A vaccine is being tested. This vaccine will not help the person who already has herpes but will protect a person from getting the virus.

Next, I will address the emotional aspects of herpes and reliable resources. Free [Medical Advice](#) published By [Dr Vivienne Balonwu](#).

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