

MANAGEMENT OF GENITAL HERPES

There is no cure for genital herpes. Once a person acquires the virus they have it for life. There are, however, a number of things that can be done to reduce the impact of genital herpes.

Counselling

Counselling is important for some people diagnosed with genital herpes. Counselling can help people deal with the emotional and social impact of a genital herpes diagnosis.

Partners of people with genital herpes might also find it useful to talk about their concerns.

Education

Medical understanding of genital herpes infection is rapidly growing. It is important that you talk regularly to a health care professional who has an understanding of herpes. Up to date information can be very helpful when talking with partners and making decisions about sex.

Management of outbreaks

During an outbreak of genital herpes, symptoms can be relieved through warm salt baths to wash the genital area. Use 1 teaspoon of salt in 600 ml of warm water, or a handful of salt in a shallow bath. Simple analgesics such as paracetamol or aspirin can be used to reduce discomfort.

What medical treatments are available?

There are 3 different antiviral medications available to treat the symptoms of genital herpes. Treatments can be prescribed in one of two ways.

Episodic treatment

You can learn to recognise recurrent episodes. The signs may be subtle such as a recurrent itch or a small split in the skin. The treatments can be taken at the onset of symptoms, this can reduce the severity of the outbreak.

Suppressive treatment

If the symptoms are recurrent and severe, medication can be taken at a lower dose all the time. This reduces the number and severity of the recurrences.

How can I reduce the risk of giving genital herpes to my partner?

You can reduce the risk of transmission of genital herpes to your sexual partner (s) by:

- avoiding sexual contact when you know you have symptoms;
- using condoms correctly every time; and
- taking antivirals as suppressive treatment.

There is evidence to show that the use of suppressive therapy and condoms helps to reduce the risk of transmission of genital herpes to an uninfected partner.

Genital herpes infection and pregnancy

If a pregnant woman has genital herpes, it is rare but possible for a baby to become infected during pregnancy and/or birth.

If this happens the baby can be treated with antiviral medication.

Sexual Health Service Tasmania is staffed Monday to Friday from 8.30 am until 5.00 pm. Clinic times vary from site to site so please contact your local office for details (see contact details on the back of this pamphlet).

**Sexual Health Service
Clinical Services**

HOBART

60 Collins Street
Hobart 7000
Ph: (03) 6233 3557

LAUNCESTON

42 Canning Street
Launceston 7250
Ph: (03) 6336 2216

DEVONPORT

23 Steele Street
Devonport 7310
Ph: (03) 6421 7759

BURNIE

11 Jones Street
BURNIE 7320
Ph: (03) 6434 6315

**SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE
A joint Australian and State
Government Program**

The Royal Hobart Hospital is Tasmania's largest hospital and provides a number of state-wide services including cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, burns management, hyperbaric and diving medicine, neonatal intensive care and high-risk obstetrics. It is the major teaching and research hospital for the State and works closely with the University of Tasmania.

Many students in the health care professions are taught within the Hospital, and gaining skills in examining and interviewing patients is an important part of their education and training. We ask for your co-operation and encourage you to participate in our teaching and research activities. Your permission is required for participation.

The Royal Hobart Hospital encourages feedback from patients, relatives and visitors. This feedback helps staff to better understand the needs of patients and provide the best possible patient care.



**The Royal Hobart Hospital
is a smoke-free site**

Date: Feb 07

Review Date: Feb 08

**Information
Pamphlet**



**Management of
Genital Herpes**