

Managing Cold Sores

Cold sores are very common, so if you get one, you shouldn't feel like there is anything wrong with you. While there is no cure or treatment available that eliminates the herpes virus from your body, there are things you can do to manage your cold sore.

This handy guide offers tips and suggestions for managing cold sores. So when your next cold sore hits, you can be prepared to attack it.

This guide is not meant to replace a discussion with your healthcare provider, so talk to your doctor today.

What is a cold sore?

A cold sore, sometimes called a "fever blister," is a blister or sore that usually appears on the outside of the lips or mouth. It is different from a canker sore, which appears inside the mouth. Cold sores may appear just once in a person's life, or return again and again.

Cold sores are usually caused by the herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1). This HSV-1 virus is part of the same virus family that causes chickenpox (varicella), shingles (herpes zoster), and genital herpes (herpes simplex virus type 2). HSV-1 infections are extremely common — it is estimated that 80% to 90% of the US population 50 years of age and older has been infected with the virus. HSV-1 is very contagious and can be spread through physical contact, like kissing. Once this virus is in the body, it stays there in nerves and never completely goes away. However, only about 30% of those infected actually ever get a cold sore.

What triggers a cold sore?

Experts still don't know exactly how the herpes virus "wakes up" and "sleeps." But they do know that certain things can activate or "trigger" a cold sore. Some of these triggers include:

- Stress, tiredness, or being "run-down"
- A cold, a fever, or the flu
- Exposure to the sun
- Hormonal changes, such as from menstruation or pregnancy
- Trauma, such as shaving cuts or dental work

Cold sores are a medical condition.

If you suffer from cold sores, you may be like many people who "just deal" with them. Maybe you avoid social situations during an outbreak, or try to cover up your cold sore with make-up. But have you ever considered talking to your doctor or healthcare provider about your cold sores?

Since cold sores are caused by a virus and are considered a medical condition, your doctor can help. He or she can write a prescription for antiviral medicine that targets the herpes virus. So feel comfortable about asking your doctor if a prescription treatment is right for you.

You can attack a cold sore from within.

When you talk to your doctor, ask about VALTREX, the first oral one-day treatment for cold sores. VALTREX is a prescription antiviral medicine, which means it is designed to stop or slow the reproduction of the active herpes virus.



(valacyclovir HCl)
1g Caplets

The recommended dose for VALTREX is 2 grams taken at the first sign of a cold sore, and then again about 12 hours later. It's important to start treatment with VALTREX as soon as you feel a cold sore coming on (tingling, itching, or burning). But be sure to follow your doctor's specific instructions. When treating cold sores with VALTREX, you should not take it for more than one day. VALTREX is not for everyone, so talk to your healthcare provider to find out if VALTREX is right for you.

If your doctor prescribes VALTREX, you'll want to have it on hand. This way, you can fight the herpes virus at the first sign of a cold sore. So don't wait until your next cold sore to talk to your doctor — have a discussion today. Then, when your next cold sore hits, you'll be prepared to attack it.

Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider.

Living with cold sores can be a hassle, but treating them doesn't have to be. Your doctor can help prepare you to attack cold sores with prescription VALTREX. So talk to your doctor today and find out if VALTREX is right for you.

Important safety information

While taking VALTREX for cold sores, you should not exceed one day of treatment, two doses taken 12 hours apart. There are no studies that show if VALTREX works when used after the appearance of a cold sore, such as bumps, blisters, or sores. VALTREX is not a cure for the cold sore virus. Even with treatment, it may be possible to spread cold sores to others.

VALTREX is intended for healthy adults. If your immune system is not normal because of advanced HIV disease, bone marrow or kidney transplant, tell your doctor to avoid a potentially serious complication. Side effects include headache and dizziness.

Please see complete Prescribing Information for VALTREX.