

Managing Genital Herpes Outbreaks if You're HIV Positive*

It is common for people with HIV to also have genital herpes. In fact, between 60-70% of people with HIV also have genital herpes. When someone is infected with both HIV and genital herpes, they may have more frequent and longer lasting outbreaks. Patients who are receiving HAART have less frequent outbreaks compared to patients not receiving HAART, but still shed virus (and may be contagious). While there is no cure or treatment available that eliminates the herpes virus from your body, there are things you can do to reduce the number of genital herpes outbreaks you have.

This guide offers suggestions for managing genital herpes outbreaks. It is not intended to replace a discussion with your healthcare provider.

Basic facts about herpes

The most common herpes viruses are herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) and herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2). Usually, HSV-1 most commonly affects areas above the waist, causing cold sores or fever blisters, and HSV-2 typically affects areas below the waist causing genital herpes. But both viruses can cause outbreaks in either area. Other common herpes infections include chickenpox and shingles.

What is genital herpes?

Genital herpes is a contagious viral infection that spreads through close physical, skin-to-skin contact, including vaginal, oral, or anal sex. It can affect both men and women, causing outbreaks from time to time.

Genital herpes symptoms

Genital herpes outbreaks may appear as painful or itchy clusters of blisters, bumps, and rashes, usually in the genital area. And there may be a burning sensation upon urination. Some symptoms, however, are not as easily recognizable. In fact, many people confuse the disease with different conditions such as jock itch, yeast infections, insect bites, and allergic reactions. When someone is infected with genital herpes and has advanced HIV disease, they can have severe and longer-lasting outbreaks.

Genital herpes and HIV

People with genital herpes have up to 3 times the risk of acquiring HIV. It is always important to practice safer sex.

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How the genital herpes virus acts in your body

After your skin comes into contact with the skin of an infected person during sexual activity (oral, vaginal, or anal sex), the herpes virus may enter your body through the skin and travel down to a group of nerves near the base of the spine. There, it goes to "sleep" and can stay sleeping for months. But from time to time, the virus "wakes up" and travels back to the surface of the skin, where it

"sheds," making more copies of itself. This shedding can occur with or without symptoms. In other words, the virus may be awake and contagious on your skin even if you don't have an outbreak. When someone is infected with both HIV and genital herpes, they typically shed HSV-2 (and may be contagious) more frequently than people without HIV. Therapy with HAART does not significantly reduce HSV-2 shedding. VALTREX has not been shown to reduce the risk of shedding or transmission of genital herpes in HIV-infected adults.

Increase the chance you'll be outbreak-free

When you talk to your healthcare provider, ask about daily VALTREX, the only herpes medication FDA approved to reduce the number of outbreaks for adults infected with HIV. Many people with HIV on daily therapy with VALTREX may go up to 6 months outbreak-free.† Individual results may vary.



**(valacyclovir HCl)
500mg Caplets, Twice Daily**

A clinical study among HIV+ people with four or more genital herpes outbreaks a year found that 65% of people were outbreak-free after taking VALTREX 500 mg twice daily for 6 months versus 26% on placebo.† Ask your healthcare provider if daily VALTREX is right for you.

Important safety information

Safer sex practices should be used with daily therapy. There are no data on the safety and efficacy of daily therapy with VALTREX in HIV+ patients for more than 6 months and in healthy adults for more than 1 year.

The use of VALTREX in patients with advanced HIV disease (CD4 cell count <100 cells/mm³) has not been established. The efficacy of VALTREX for the episodic treatment of genital herpes in HIV+ patients has not been shown.

There is no cure for herpes. Even with treatment, it may be possible to spread herpes. It is not known if VALTREX can reduce the risk of spreading genital herpes in HIV-infected adults or in same-sex couples.

VALTREX is available by prescription only. To avoid a potentially serious complication, tell your doctor if your immune system is not normal because of advanced HIV disease, or bone marrow or kidney transplant. Common side effects are headache, fatigue, and rash.

*CD4 cell count of ≥ 100

†Results from 293 HIV+ patients in a large clinical study who received either VALTREX 500 mg twice daily or placebo. Patients were on antiretroviral therapy prior to starting the study and had a history of four or more genital herpes outbreaks per year.