

Learn the facts. Protect yourself. Get tested.

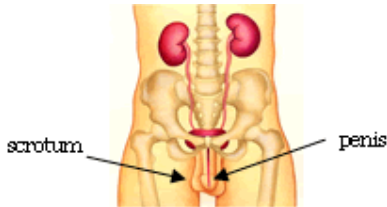
Genital Herpes (JEN-ih-tal HUR-peeZ)

sometimes called "love blisters", "beard", "herpes simplex virus" or "HSV"

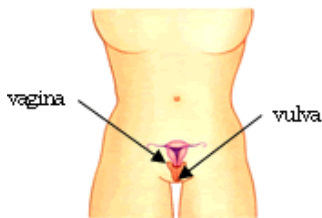
What is genital herpes?

It's caused by **a virus** and usually infects the areas on or near:

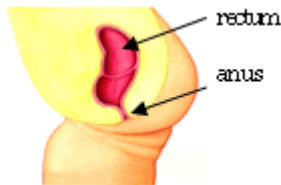
- the penis and scrotum



- the vulva



- the anus or rectum



- or the mouth.



How do you get genital herpes?

If you are kissing, touching or rubbing on or near the sores, you can get it. You can get it even if you can't see any sores. It can also be passed from mother to baby during birth.

You can't get it from:

- hugging
- shaking hands
- sharing food or using the same dish

How do you know you have it?

Many people don't know they have it. They may not have symptoms or may think the sores are something else.

You may have:

- small sores, blisters, bumps or a rash
- itching
- pain or burning when you urinate or have sex
- a tingling or scratchy feeling in your mouth and lips or between your legs
- a fever or swollen glands

What is the test like?

A doctor or nurse will usually look at the sores and wipe the area with a small swab



and in some cases they may also take a sample of your blood.



How is genital herpes treated?

There is no cure for the virus that causes herpes. There are pills you can take that may help you get rid of the sores you have and may help keep you from getting more sores. Once you have the virus, it will not go away and can be passed to someone else. If you have genital herpes, talk with your health care provider about how you can manage the disease and stay healthy.

What can you do to protect yourself?

- You can choose not to have sex
- You can reduce your number of partners if you choose to have sex
- You can use condoms when you have sex
- You can talk with your partner(s) about STDs
- You can talk with your health care provider and get tested

To find out more about STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) or for information about where you can go to get tested, call (617) 983-6940 or visit www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/std

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