

Herpes Simplex Virus (Genital Herpes)

NO MORE VALTREX?

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Did You Know. . .

- Genital herpes is a **sexually transmitted infection** caused by two types of viruses, Herpes Simplex Virus type 1 (**HSV-1**) and Herpes Simplex Virus type 2 (**HSV-2**).
- **More than 1 out of 5** 30-year-old women have genital herpes.
- You can get herpes from a sex partner **who does not have a visible sore** or who may not know he/she is infected.
- Most people who have genital herpes have **no symptoms**.
- The infection stays in the body forever. . . **or does it?**

Hitting Rock Bottom

- “When the stigma hit, it hit hard. I felt both the **physical and the emotional pain**, often crying myself to sleep at night. It felt like the end of the world when I received the diagnosis. I felt **hopelessness**.”
- “I went through a lot of phases after my diagnosis from ‘**It can’t be herpes**’ to ‘**I’m fine**’ to ‘**It’s about time I own this**’”. I loved expressing myself through fashion and beauty trends, but wearing black lipstick from Christmas to New Years was a bit much. The **shame** was overbearing.”
- “I fell asleep every night **researching** herpes, herpes transmission, and blood test results on the internet. It’s hard to separate the **valuable information** from the **junk**. Everyone has an opinion that is published as fact and this can be **scary**. I got to the point that I couldn’t determine what was a credible source and what wasn’t. **That’s why I’m here**.”

Mechanisms

Western Medicine

- Access the body via the **genital mucosa**, replicate in the stratified squamous epithelium, and then are taken up by **sensory nerve fibers**
- Remains in a **dormant** state
- Reactivation/**Recurrence**
- Entire process controlled by the **immune system**

Chinese Medicine

- Excess Condition – **initial outbreak**
- Deficient Condition - **recurrence**
- LR and GB meridians
- LR and GB organs

HSV-2: A Sexually Transmitted Infection



Clinical Manifestations

Initial Outbreak

- multiple blisters in the genital area that become painful ulcers
- the vagina, vulva, buttocks, anus, and thighs may be affected
- blisters on the outer labia may crust over and heal. New lesions may develop for up to five to seven days after the first group appears
- +/- tender, swollen lymph nodes in the groin, flu-like symptoms, such as joint pain, fever, and headache, and it may be painful to urinate
- headache, nausea and vomiting, or difficulty urinating when the herpes infection affects the nervous system

Recurrent Outbreak

- milder than the initial outbreak
- ulcers may develop in the same area as those of the first outbreak or may appear in other areas
- lesions may develop in areas where there was no direct contact (i.e. lesions around the anus without having had anal sex)

Complications

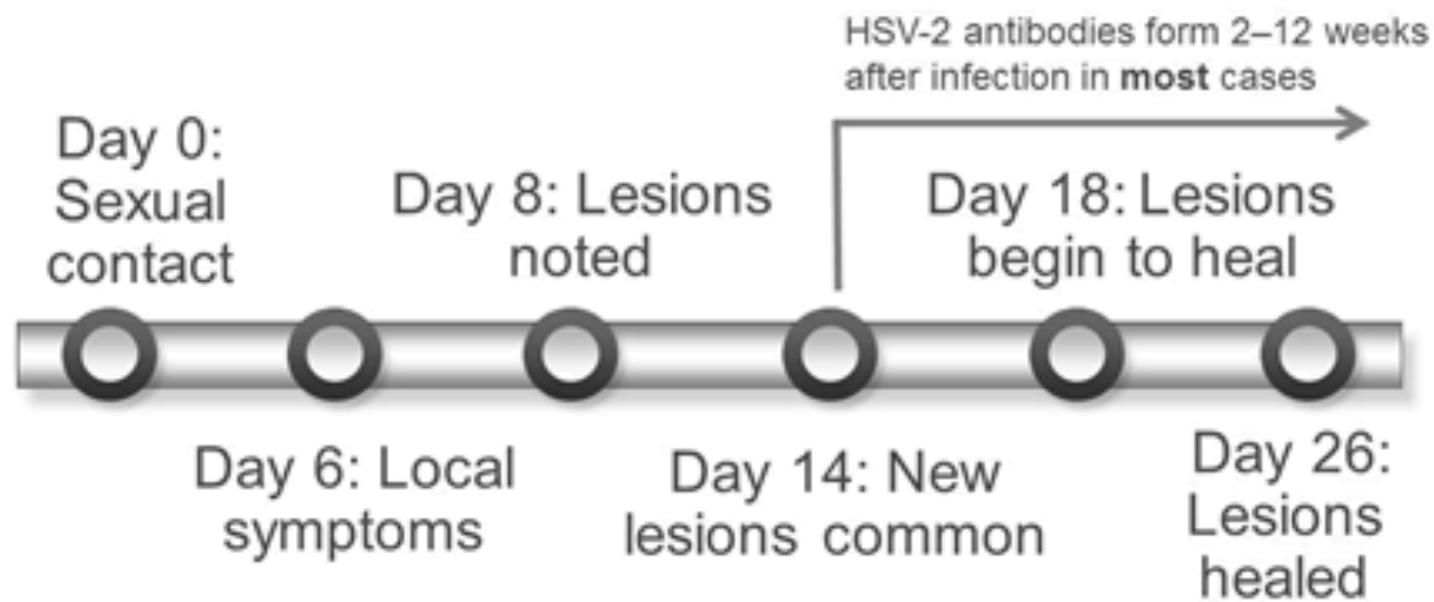
- **Other sexually transmitted infections** - Having genital sores increases one's risk of transmitting or contracting other sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
- **Newborn infection** - Babies born to infected mothers can be exposed to the virus during the birthing process. This may result in brain damage, blindness or death for the newborn.
- **Bladder problems** - In some cases, the sores associated with genital herpes can cause inflammation around the urethra. The swelling can close the urethra for several days, requiring the insertion of a catheter to drain your bladder.
- **Meningitis** - In rare instances, HSV infection leads to inflammation of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord.
- **Rectal inflammation (proctitis)** - Genital herpes can lead to inflammation of the lining of the rectum.

Diagnosis

- **Physical Exam**
- **Viral culture** - This test involves taking a tissue sample or scraping of the sores for examination in the laboratory.
- **Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test** - PCR is used to copy DNA from a sample of blood, tissue from a sore, or spinal fluid. The DNA can then be tested to establish the presence of HSV and determine which type of HSV is present.
- **Blood test** - This test analyzes a sample of your blood for the presence of HSV antibodies to detect a past herpes infection.

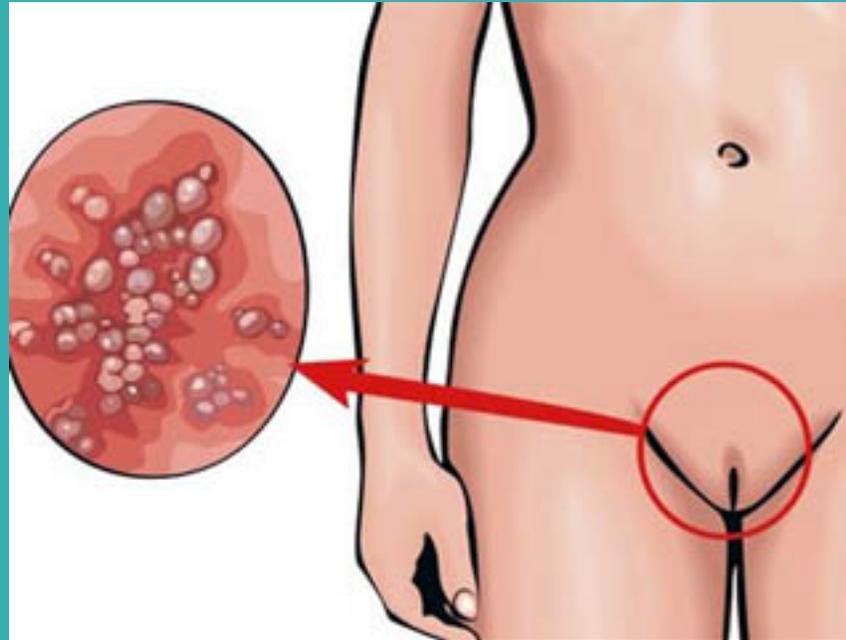
Treatment

- Antiviral medications used for genital herpes include:
 - Acyclovir (**Zovirax**)
 - Valacyclovir (**Valtrex**)



Myths

- Only **promiscuous** people get genital herpes.
- A **blood test** is the best way to know if you have herpes.
- Your **sex life** is over.



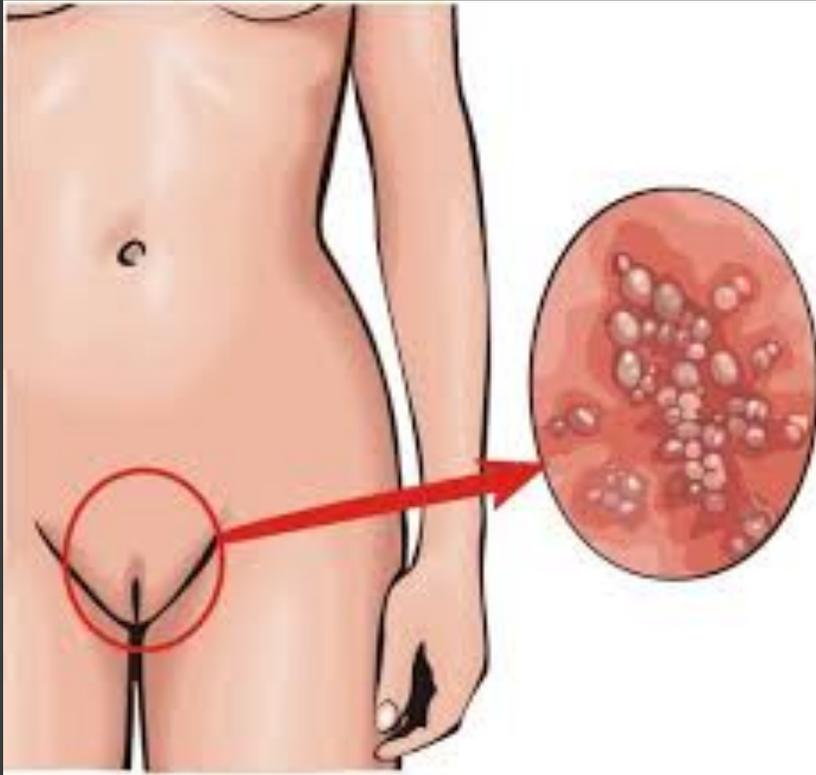
Genital Herpes

FROM A CHINESE MEDICINE PERSPECTIVE

Etiology

- Genital herpes is caused by infection with the herpes simplex virus (**HSV, usually type 2**). It can also be caused by **herpes simplex virus type 1**, which is the cause of oral herpes (cold sores on the mouth and lips).
- Tingling or shooting pains may occur before the blisters appear. **Herpes cycles between periods of active disease followed by periods without symptoms**. The first episode is often more severe and may be associated with fever, muscle pains, swollen lymph nodes and headaches. Over time, episodes of active disease decrease in frequency and severity.
- HSV-2 is **transmitted by direct contact with body fluids or lesions of an infected individual**. Transmission may still occur when symptoms are not present. It may be spread to an infant during childbirth. After infection, the viruses are transported along sensory nerves to the nerve cell bodies, where they reside lifelong. **Causes of recurrence may include: decreased immune function, stress, and sunlight exposure**. The diagnosis may be confirmed by viral culture or detecting herpes DNA in fluid from blisters. **Testing the blood for antibodies against the virus can confirm a previous infection but will be negative in new infections**.

Mechanisms



- **Excess Condition:** Initial Outbreak
- **Deficient Condition:** Recurrent Outbreak

Common Patterns

Excess

- Damp Heat Injuring the SP
- LR Qi Stagnation w/ Damp Heat & Phlegm
- Damp Heat (Damp > Heat)
- **Damp Heat Obstructing Channels**

Deficiency

- KI Deficiency w/ Blood Deficiency

Mixed

- SP Qi Deficiency w/ Dampness

Treatment Pillars

Acupuncture & Moxibustion

- **Indirect moxa on the lesions**
- **LR/GB Damp Heat**
 - Dannangxue, GV9, GB24, GB34, LR14, SI4, BL18, BL19, BL48
 - LR2, SP6, SP9, SP 10
 - **Sacral pain:** + GB30, BL31, and BL34
 - **Fever:** + LI11 and TE5
 - **SP Deficiency:** + ST36
 - **Yin Deficiency:** + KI7

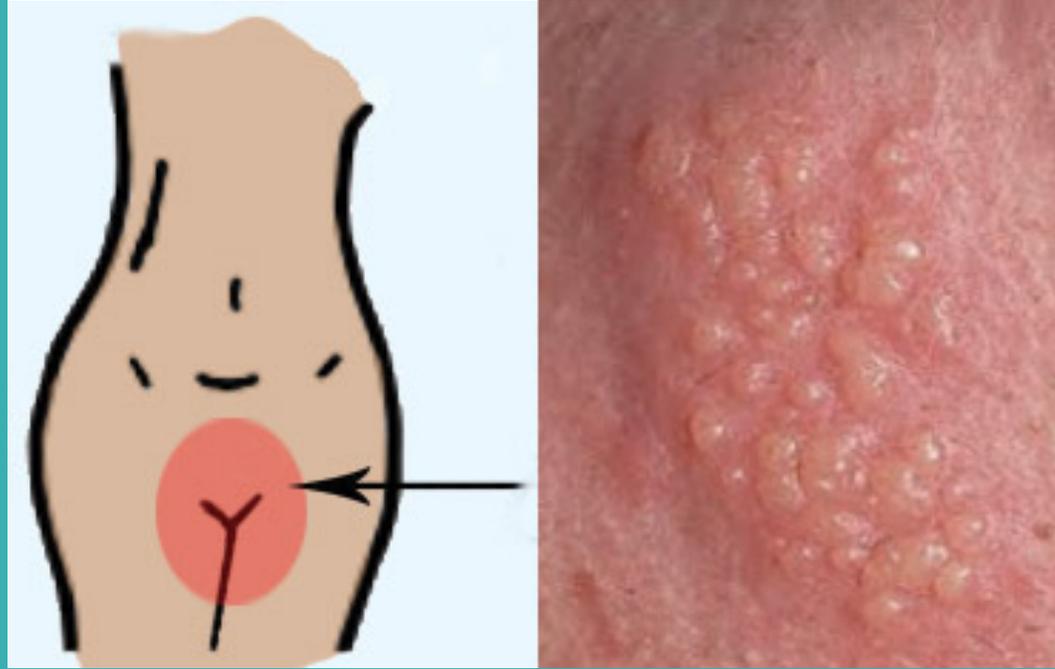
Nutrition & Chinese Herbs

Clean, bland diet

- **Topical**
 - Qing Dai Gao
 - Si Huang San
 - Tea tree oil (areas of recurrence)
- **Oral**
 - **Zhong Jie Feng**
 - **Initial Outbreak**
 - Long Dan Xie Gan Tang
 - **Recurrence**
 - Huang Qi + powdered garlic and Vitamin C
 - Ge Xia Zhu Yu Tang
 - Zhen Qi Fu Zheng Wan
 - Bu Zhong Yi Qi Wan

Exercise & Meditation

- **Plenty of rest**
- **Movement** - walk, LR qi gong, tai chi, yin yoga
- **Reduces stress**
- **Anxiety**
- **Depression**
- **Chronic Pain**



Genital Herpes

CASE STUDIES

“Attacks WITH Valtrex”

- Age: 24
- History
 - Initial outbreak 2 years ago, taking since then
 - Four months ago, repeated outbreaks, switched to Zovirax
 - Still experiencing rash and burning pain in genital area PLUS spread to lower back and legs
 - Zovirax not helping
- Signs/Symptoms
 - Headaches, dizziness, irritability, swollen itchy vulva, constipation, painful urination, noticeable groin sweat, and short menstrual cycle
 - P: wiry, rapid, and big
 - T: red with even redder edges; yellow and greasy coating

“Endometriosis → Genital Herpes”

- Age: 44
- History
 - Severe endometriosis (surgical removal 4 times and the endometriosis returned)
 - Several types of treatments (including Acyclovir) with only temporary relief
- Signs/Symptoms
 - Initial outbreak contracted via oral sex
 - Pain, burning sensation upon urination, and skin eruptions
 - P: Wiry
 - T: Dusky with red tip and edges; thin, white greasy coat

“Stressed Out” Outbreaks

- Age: 32
- History
 - Contracted herpes 10 years ago with frequent outbreaks over the last 5 years
 - Several types of treatments (including Acyclovir) with only temporary relief
- Signs/Symptoms
 - Stressed, tired, emotionally upset, sick, or pre-menstrual
 - Itchiness, soreness → fatigue, depression, and difficulty concentrating at work
 - Presented during a recurrence (appeared physically “rundown”)
 - P: deep and thin throughout, barely perceptible in left chi position
 - T: pale, swollen with slight teeth marks, slight yellow coating, and moderately distended dark purple sublingual veins

Our patients do not need to live with genital herpes or take Zovirax for a long periods of time. We **CAN** offer more effective treatments with herbal medicine enabling our patients to lead healthy, happy lives.