

HERPES SIMPLEX VIRUS (HSV)

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

SYMPTOMS

Primary Herpes Simplex infections present with these symptoms:

- Fever, fatigue and irritability.
- Initially, the gums become fiery red and swollen in areas.
- The gums between the teeth may bleed to the touch.
- Small blisters rapidly erupt throughout the mouth causing pain.
- Painful ulcers quickly form over the mucosa, gums, palate, tongue and lips.

Recurrent Herpes Simplex infections present with these symptoms:

- Blisters that ulcerate and cause pain.
- Blisters repeatedly develop at the same site in and around the mouth.
- Recurrences on areas of the lip are more apparent than intraoral recurrences.
- Prodromal (early) neurogenic symptoms such as tingling, throbbing, and burning often precede the eruption of lesions by 24 hours.

CAUSES

- A common viral infection by Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) Type 1 or 2.
- Viral transmission occurs by direct contact of infected secretions, resulting in 1/2 million cases of primary herpetic gingivostomatitis annually in the United States. This disease process lasts between 12 days.
- HSV-1 is the causative organism in the majority of cases; however Type 2 herpes virus, which has a propensity to infect the skin below the waist, can cause herpetic gingivostomatitis by oral-genital or oral-oral contact
- Stress and sun may re-activate the virus.

TREATMENT

- This Infection is self limiting, but remains and may be re-activated.
- Relieve symptoms, prevent secondary infection and support general health.
- Supportive therapy includes lots of fluids, protein, vitamin and mineral food supplements and rest.
- Viscous Lidocaine, 50% mixture of Benadryl & Kaopectate, Benadryl elixir.
- Return for re-evaluation if no improvement in two weeks.

PREVENTION

- Recurrent Herpes Simplex may be prevented by applying sunscreen to the effected areas and/or using oral acyclovir during the prodromal stage.
- Avoid touching herpetic lesions and then eye, genital and other body areas, avoid topical steroids and do not rub lip ointments over infected areas.

Student Health Center

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