



Genital herpes

It is caused by a virus (Herpes simplex virus type 1 or type 2) that causes lesions circumscribed to the mucous membranes and the skin.

Skin lesions are characterised by the appearance of small cluster-like vesicles that turn into ulcers and subsequently into crusts, while mucous lesions are like clustered erosions. Intense pain and itching are experienced.

In women, genital herpes is mostly localised on the labia majora and minora, but you cannot exclude lesions to the vagina and the cervix as well, which can be associated with serous or whitish discharge.

In men, lesions mainly affect the area of the glans and the foreskin, but they can also affect the anus and the immediately surrounding area.

In both men and women, genital herpes can affect the skin of the genital area, pubis, groin and perineum (i.e. the area that contains the scrotum or vulva and reaches up to the coccyx). Lesions localised on other parts of the body are also possible. Transmission is through close contact with a person that expels the virus from lesions, but it can also occur when lesions are not visible.

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The lesions heal in 1-4 weeks. However, given that, after the first infection, the virus stays in the body throughout the life in a state of quiescence and can reactivate periodically, the disease tends to recur (relapse) with a frequency varying from person to person, particularly as a result of conditions that occasion psycho-physical stress and/or depression of the immune system.

ANTIVIRAL DRUGS, TO BE TAKEN PURSUANT TO MEDICAL PRESCRIPTION, ARE AVAILABLE FOR THERAPY. ALTHOUGH NO TREATMENT IS CAPABLE OF REMOVING THE VIRUS FROM THE BODY, THE THERAPY HELPS MITIGATE THE SYMPTOMS AND REDUCE THE DURATION OF THE ACUTE PHASE OF THE DISEASE. THE INFECTION CONTRACTED BY THE BABY AT THE TIME OF BIRTH CAN BE PARTICULARLY SEVERE (NEONATAL HERPES).



**REMEMBER:
SPECIFIC DRUGS
HELPING TREATMENT
ARE AVAILABLE.**