



What are Cold Sores?

Cold sores form as a **cluster of small blisters** on the lips, around the corners of the mouth, or sometimes inside the nose. They are **also referred to as fever blisters**, and the medical term for them is recurrent herpes labialis.

Once the **cold sores** develop, the **blisters** are more obvious and clearly recognizable. When the blisters break, an **extremely painful, moist sore develops**. Thereafter, a crust or scab forms over the sore.

Cold sores are **caused by a highly contagious viral infection**, the herpes simplex virus-1 (HSV-1). If you are exposed and infected with the **herpes virus**, it may stay dormant **in your system forever**, with occasional bouts of activity and infection.

Types of HSV infections

There are two types of HSV infections – HSV type 1 and HSV type 2. **common cause of cold sores**

- **HSV type 1** usually only infects those body tissues that lie above the waistline and is the most . Children often develop the HSV-1 virus, becoming infected from a sibling or parent.
- **HSV type 2** generally infects those body tissues that lie below the waistline, and is more common in the genital area. However, it is also responsible for approximately 10% of cold sores in adults.

Diagnosing Cold Sores

Although **most cold sores are self-diagnosed** and cared for at home, there are definitive diagnostic methods available. The diagnosis is based on the medical history of the patient, physical symptoms, as well as **examination of the skin**. A viral culture will confirm whether the diagnosis of a cold sore is accurate. Cell scrapings from the blister will also be able to detect whether you have herpes type 1 or 2.

What Causes Cold Sores?

The most common way the **virus is spread is through physical contact**, such as kissing. Washing your hands thoroughly after touching the affected area will help prevent spreading the virus to other parts of your body or another person.

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A cold sore **infection occurs when latent herpes simplex virus** particles become reactivated. It is not a sign of a recently acquired herpes simplex infection. Also known as primary herpetic stomatitis, the initial herpes simplex virus infection usually does not take the form of a cold sore. It is for this reason that a person may not associate their initial exposure to the [herpes virus](#) with their current outbreak.

With initial infection, **the virus penetrates small breaks in the skin** caused through injury or trauma, and then travels to the nerve roots on the spinal cord, where it lies dormant. Whenever our immune systems are low, the virus travels through the body down to the sensory nerves to the skin. When the virus reaches the cells of the skin, it multiplies and damages the skin cells, resulting in [blisters](#). Eventually a cold sore develops.

Whether a cold sore is visible or not, this **virus is always seeking new cells to infect**. This process is called viral shedding. Because there are large numbers of herpes particles being shed or released, it is extremely easy to expose or even infect others.

The eyes seldom become infected, but it would be wise to protect them from the virus, since it can potentially cause eye problems and, in extreme cases, blindness. Managing your stress levels and **avoiding excessive sunlight** can help to reduce outbreaks.

Contributing Factors that May Trigger an Outbreak

- Colds, the flu and other upper respiratory tract infections
- Excessive exposure to the sun and wind
- Hormonal changes during menstruation
- Dry, cracked lips and injuries as a result of cosmetic surgery, laser therapy, or chemical peels
- Physical and emotional stress lower the immune system (thus allowing the virus to reactivate)

Warning Signs and Symptoms of a Potential Cold Sore Outbreak


These types of signs are referred to as the prodrome or prodromal symptoms and include:

- A sense of fatigue, irritability, headache, tingling, numbness, swelling, fever, or pain may be felt prior to the outbreak of a cold sore
- Localized redness and swelling (inflammation) may occur even though the skin may appear normal
- Mouth becomes painful and gums are intensely inflamed, usually after the first signs of infection
- Small [blisters](#) may have formed that do not look like blisters as yet, but rather look like tiny red bumps



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

Help for Cold Sores

Cold sores treatment should begin as soon as the symptoms first appear. There are a variety of topical creams such as skin protectants and oral analgesics that are available over-the-counter that can provide temporary relief. There are also prescription medications available; but as with other drug treatment, they carry the risk of side effects. Most **cold sores** usually clear within 7-10 days.

Natural Remedies

A more natural alternative to **treating cold sores** is the use of herbal and homeopathic remedies. These remedies are gentle to use, and also address your overall health and well-being without harsh side effects. Herbs such as Echinacea and Viscum album can provide a **natural immune system boost**. Astragalus membranaceus is a potent Chinese remedy with a variety of benefits as a convalescent and rejuvenating tonic. Olea europea (extract of olive leaf) contains a compound called oleuropein acid, which is effective against numerous viruses, bacteria, and fungi.

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques,

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aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take



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1) All Native Remedies products are manufactured according to the highest pharmaceutical standards - using only the best quality raw ingredients from nature's medicine chest.

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