



# COLD SORES (AKA: FEVER BLISTERS)



## What are cold sores?

Cold sores are small patches of tiny fluid-filled blisters on or around your lips. They are common, and usually take up to 2 weeks to heal.

## Symptoms:

- **Tingling and itching**- around your lips, occurring 1-2 days before blister eruption.
- **Blistering**- eruption along the border of your lips; occasionally on face or nose
- **Oozing & Crusting**- after a day or two, blisters ooze and develop healing crust (scab)



## How is it spread/caused?

Cold sores are caused by Herpes Simplex Virus-1, and are spread by person to person close contact, such as kissing, intimate contact (including oral to genital contact), sharing drinks or eating utensils with someone who has active HSV-1 symptoms. Avoid contact with fluids from blisters or scabs. Once infected with HSV-1, the virus lays dormant in nerve cells and emerges by triggers. There is no cure, but there is treatment for outbreaks.

## Common Triggers:

- Viral infection or fever
- Hormonal changes, such as menstruation
- Exposure to sunlight and wind
- Stress
- Severe fatigue
- Changes in the immune system

## How is it treated?

- Use Abreva cream (OTC) at first tingling sensation.
- Take pain reliever such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Ice/Cold compresses may be soothing

## See a provider if:

- You have a weakened immune system
- Symptoms are severe
- You have frequent recurrences of cold sores
- You experience irritation in your eyes

Check out the latest updates and more details from **the Mayo Clinic:**

