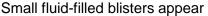


Cold Sores

A cold sore usually starts with a tingling, itching or burning feeling, they are common and usually clear up on their own within 10 days. They're contagious until they go away.







The blisters can appear anywhere on the face



The blisters burst and crust over into a scab

How can I avoid triggers/ suggested lifestyle changes

Some people find that certain things trigger a cold sore, such as another illness, sunshine or periods. If you regularly get cold sores, it may be a good idea to keep antiviral cream in your medicine cabinet. As soon as you recognise the early tingling feeling of a cold sore use the antiviral creams as they don't always work after blisters appear.

Why cold sores come back

Cold sores are caused by a virus called herpes simplex. Once you have the virus, it stays in your skin for the rest of your life. Sometimes it causes a cold sore. Most people are exposed to the virus when they're young after close contact with someone who has a cold sore. It doesn't usually cause any symptoms until you're older.

How do I treat?

Cold sores take time to heal and they are very contagious, especially when the blisters burst. Don't kiss babies if you have a cold sore. It can lead to neonatal herpes, which is very dangerous to newborn babies.

Do

- eat cool, soft foods
- use an antiseptic mouthwash if it hurts to brush your teeth
- wash your hands with soap and water before and after applying cream
- avoid anything that triggers your cold sores
- use sunblock lip balm (SPF 15 or above) if sunshine is the trigger
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen to ease pain and swelling (liquid paracetamol is available for children) – don't give aspirin to children under 16
- · drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration
- wash your hands with soap and water before and after applying cream

Don't

- eat acidic or salty food
- touch your cold sore (apart from applying cream)
- rub cream into the cold sore dab it on instead
- kiss anyone while you have a cold sore
- share anything that comes into contact with a cold sore (such as cold sore creams, cutlery or lipstick)
- have oral sex until your cold sore completely heals – the cold sore virus also causes genital herpes

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³ DR P. MARAZZI/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY



Examples of products available to buy include if applicable

Aciclovir Cream (also known as Zovirax)

When should I seek advice?

- the cold sore hasn't started to heal within 10 days
- you're worried about a cold sore or think it's something else
- the cold sore is very large or painful
- you or your child also have swollen, painful gums and sores in the mouth (gingivostomatitis)
- you're pregnant there's an increased risk of neonatal herpes
- you have a weakened immune system for example, because of chemotherapy or diabetes

More information is available at the following websites

- NHS Choices www.nhs.uk
- Stay Well Derbyshire <u>www.nhsstaywellderbyshire.co.uk</u>
- Or visit your local pharmacy for advice

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