

COLD SORE/FEVER BLISTER

A cold sore or fever blister is a common problem. The most common area for this problem to occur is around the mouth. It can occur, however, on any body area. It is typical for a cold sore to come back in the same general area. Some patients develop a cold sore once a year; other patients develop cold sores quite frequently such as once a month. The specific treatment for your cold sore will depend on its location and how often it comes to the surface.

Technically a cold sore is a viral infection of the nerve. The virus that causes this condition is in the herpes virus family. Unless your cold sore is located in the genital area, it does not have anything to do with genital herpes or any sexually transmitted disease.

The problem with a cold sore is that there is no treatment for the virus when it is underneath the skin in the nerve. The only effective treatment is when the virus starts to come to the surface of the skin and forms the tiny blisters or red areas.

The most important aspect of treating a cold sore is to begin the treatment as soon as possible. Many patients have a cold sore phase known as a prodrome. In the prodrome, there are sensations in the skin such as burning, tingling, or itching, which indicate a cold sore will soon be coming. If the treatment can be started during this prodrome stage, it may be aborted completely or come out to a much lesser degree. If a cold sore has been present in the skin for two days or more, treatment does not really help.

In most cases, an oral medicine is used for a cold sore. Most patients begin the treatment as soon as possible for each cold sore outbreak. The specific medication will be given in your case depending on your individual problem.

Many patients feel that stress brings on their cold sore, which may be true. The only well documented external factor which can bring on a cold sore is excess sun exposure. If you have a cold sore on a sun exposed area such as the lip, it is very important to use a sunblock to prevent it from coming to the surface.

Again, a cold sore is a common problem for which there is treatment available. If you have any other questions regarding your problem, please ask before you leave the office.