

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

An annual chlamydia screening is recommended for sexually active women under age 25. Untreated chlamydia is a leading cause of infertility.

Are cold sores the same as herpes?

Yes. Cold sores, or “fever blisters,” are caused by the Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV). This very common virus, found in 50-80% of people aged 14-49, causes a small sore, or cluster of blisters, around the border of the lips and the edges of the mouth.

Most people acquire HSV-1 in their youth by receiving a casual kiss from family members or friends. Some people have frequent recurrences (often triggered by illness, stress, or the sun’s ultraviolet rays) while others may never have another outbreak. Many people have such mild symptoms they don’t even know they have oral herpes, mistaking the tiny sores for something else.

HSV-1 is transferred from a sore to someone’s mucous membranes or broken/cut skin. It can also be spread from the mouth to the genital area (through oral sex) and cause blisters on the genitals (genital herpes).

It’s best to avoid kissing (or oral sex with) someone who has an active or healing (scabbing) cold sore. Be aware that people can spread HSV-1 even when there are no visible sores present. There is no cure for oral herpes but there are medications that can shorten the duration and severity of an outbreak. For more info, visit www.ashasexualhealth.org

What’s the difference between canker sores and cold sores?

Canker sores occur inside the mouth, on the gums, cheek, roof of the mouth, or tongue. They are NOT herpes and are not contagious, yet they can be very painful, especially when eating or talking. They generally will heal in a week or two.

A canker sore can develop from many different causes. Typically, the sore

develops in response to a mild mouth injury, perhaps caused by overzealous tooth brushing, dental work, chewing hard or crusty bread, or accidentally biting the side of the cheek. Stress, hormonal changes, eating spicy or acidic foods (like grapefruit, pineapple, or oranges) can also trigger a canker sore.



www.health.arizona.edu

Have a question? Email it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu



**CAMPUS
HEALTH**

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, MA, CHES, David Salafsky, MPH, and Carrie Hardesty, MEd, CHES, health educators at the UA Campus Health Service.