



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → Genital sores - male

URL of this page: [//medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003221.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003221.htm)

## Genital sores - male

A male genital sore is any sore or lesion that appears on the penis, scrotum, or male urethra.

### Causes

A common cause of male genital sores are infections that are spread through sexual contact, such as:

- Genital herpes -- small, painful blisters filled with clear or straw-colored fluid
- Genital warts -- flesh-colored spots that are raised or flat, and may look like the top of a cauliflower
- Chancroid -- a small bump in the genitals, which becomes an ulcer within a day of its appearance
- Syphilis -- small, painless open sore or ulcer [called a chancre] on the genitals
- Granuloma inguinale -- small, beefy-red bumps appear on the genitals or around the anus
- Lymphogranuloma venereum -- small painless sore on the male genitals

Other types of male genital sores may be caused by rashes such as psoriasis, molluscum contagiosum, allergic reactions, and non-sexually transmitted infections.

For some of these problems, a sore may also be found at other places on the body, such as in the mouth and throat.

### Home Care

If you notice a genital sore:

- See a health care provider right away. Do not try to treat yourself because self-care can make it harder for the provider to find the cause of the problem.
- Abstain from all sexual contact until you've been examined by your provider.

### When to Contact a Medical Professional

Contact your provider if:

- You have any unexplained genital sores
- New sores appear in other parts of your body

# What to Expect at Your Office Visit

Your provider will perform a physical exam. The exam will include the genitals, pelvis, skin, lymph nodes, mouth, and throat.

Your provider will ask questions such as:

- What does the sore look like and where is it located?
- Does the sore itch or hurt?
- When did you first notice the sore? Have you ever had similar sores in the past?
- What are your sexual habits?
- Do you have any other symptoms such as drainage from the penis, painful urination, or signs of infection?
- Do you have pain during intercourse?
- Has a partner tested positive for an STD or noted similar sores?

Different tests may be done depending on the possible cause. These may include blood tests, cultures, or biopsies.

Treatment will depend on the cause. Your provider may ask you to avoid sexual activity or use a condom for a while.

## Alternative Names

Sores - male genitals; Ulcers - male genitals

## References

Augenbraun MH. Genital skin and mucous membrane lesions. In: Bennett JE, Dolin R, Blaser MJ, eds. *Mandell, Douglas, and Bennett's Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases*. 9th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2020:chap 106.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Sexually transmitted infections treatment guidelines, 2021. [www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/default.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/default.htm) [https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/default.htm]. Updated June 13, 2023. Accessed September 12, 2023.

Clutterbuck DJ. Sexually transmitted infections. In: Penman ID, Ralston SH, Strachan MWJ, Hobson RP, eds. *Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine*. 24th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2023:chap 15.

Link RE, Tang N. Cutaneous diseases of the external genitalia. In: Partin AW, Dmochowski RR, Kavoussi LR, Peters CA, eds. *Campbell-Walsh-Wein Urology*. 12th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2021:chap 59.

## Review Date 8/23/2023

Updated by: LaQuita Martinez, MD, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Emory Johns Creek Hospital, Alpharetta, GA. Also reviewed by David C. Dugdale, MD, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.



Health Content  
Provider  
06/01/2028

A.D.A.M., Inc. is accredited by [URAC](http://www.urac.org), for Health Content Provider ([www.urac.org](http://www.urac.org)). URAC's [accreditation program](#) is an independent audit to verify that A.D.A.M. follows rigorous standards of quality and accountability. A.D.A.M. is among the first to achieve this important distinction for online health information and services. Learn more about A.D.A.M.'s [editorial policy](#), [editorial process](#), and [privacy policy](#).

The information provided herein should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions. Links to other sites are provided for information only – they do not constitute endorsements of those other sites. No warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, is made as to the accuracy, reliability, timeliness, or correctness of any translations made by a third-party service of the information provided herein into any other language. © 1997-2025 A.D.A.M., a business unit of Ebix, Inc. Any duplication or distribution of the information contained herein is strictly prohibited.



National Library of Medicine 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
National Institutes of Health