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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

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