

Herpes Simplex Guidance

Overview

Cold sores are common for many people in the UK. Like all viruses, they are contagious and pose a risk to others. The herpes simplex virus is spread through contact.

Symptoms and Risks

Cold sores usually emerge as a small ulcer-like patch on or surrounding the lip line. They can appear in a matter of hours and, depending on the severity, usually take between seven days and four weeks to heal. From the time they begin to emerge to the point at which they are fully healed, they pose a contagion risk.

Guidance for Dental Appointments

Non-Emergency Treatment

If patients have had a cold sore for less than 2 weeks, we ask them to reschedule any non-emergency dental treatment or hygienist appointments until after this contagious period has passed. This is not only because of the high risk of spreading the virus but also because your lips may feel sore and could crack or bleed during treatment.

Emergency Treatment

If urgent dental treatment is required (you are in pain and need immediate attention), our dentists will request that your cold sore be protected with a cold sore plaster to minimise the risk of cross-infection during emergency dental treatment.

Rescheduling Due to Cold Sores

If you get a cold sore and have a dental or hygienist appointment arranged, please call the practice with as much notice as possible to reschedule any non-emergency treatment. You will not be charged a late cancellation fee if you cancel due to a cold sore.