

Cold Sores

Cold sores, also known as fever blisters, are painful fluid-filled lesions caused by the herpes simplex virus type 1 infection. Anyone who suffers from cold sores knows what a nuisance they are.

Not only are cold sores painful and **unsightly**, they are also very difficult to prevent. And, although they may not be cured or completely prevented, steps may be taken to **reduce the frequency** of the blisters and shorten the **duration** of their **occurrence**. Sufferers are aware of the **tell-tale** signs of herpes blisters shortly due to appear: a **tight tingling** slightly **burning sensation** in the lip area. You wake up the next day and there it is! The typical symptoms are the fluid-filled blisters on a reddened area of skin around the mouth. These symptoms, felt before the blisters appear, are known as the **prodrome phase**,

which is the term given to any early symptoms indicating the onset of an illness.

Pharmacy customer:
Good morning.

PTA: Good morning, how may I help you?

I just know that I'm going to get a cold sore within the next 24 hours!

Well, it's good to come to us before the blisters appear.

I haven't had a cold sore for ages, and I was hoping there was some type of wonder drug to help.

Oh yes. There have been quite a few advances in herpes simplex treatment in the last years. Some need a **prescription**, though.

Are there any non-prescription medicines? You know some type of cream or gel to apply to the affected area?

Of course, this cream here is really effective and you can use it even if the blisters have already appeared. It contains penciclovir. You should **apply** it every two hours and at least six times a day.

I hope it works, I'm going on holiday soon and that's the last thing that I need.

That's probably the reason that your cold sore has appeared.

Really! Why?

One common name for lip herpes is fever blisters, and fever is one of the

triggers. Stress and **fatigue** are two of the other main triggers, as well as exposure to the sun and menstruation.

Ah! Exposure to the sun! We're going to a very sunny country and I need some new sun milk.

Certainly, this one here is very light and provides good protection. As soon as your cold sore has fully healed, I recommend a lip balm with a UVP factor to protect your lips from further exposure. Try to avoid too much sun.

Thank you. I'll take both with me. Anything else that you can recommend? Are there any precautions that I can take?

Well, the first thing is to avoid **squeezing, pinching** or picking at the blisters as soon as they start to crust.

That's hard not to do!

Avoid kissing, obviously! And contact with infants, people with eczema or with a **suppressed** immune system. These people are all at risk of **severe** infection.

I'll do that.

Try to avoid sharing things such as towels, lipstick and other items when the blisters are still present.

I will. Thank you. Bye.

Bye! And have a nice holiday. ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

| | |
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| cold sore | Lippenherpes |
| nuisance | Ärgernis |
| unsightly | unansehnlich |
| reduce the frequency | die Häufigkeit verringern |
| duration | Dauer |
| occurrence | Auftreten |
| tell-tale | verräterisch |
| tight | (hier) (es) spannt |
| tingling | kribbelnd, prickelnd |
| burning | brennend |
| sensation | (hier) Gefühl |
| prodrome | Prodrome, Frühsymptom einer Erkrankung |
| prescription | Rezept, Verschreibung |
| apply | auftragen |
| high yield | ergiebig |
| trigger | Auslöser |
| fatigue | Ermüdung, Ermattung |
| squeezing | ausquetschen |
| pinching | zwicken |
| suppressed | unterdrückt |
| severe | schwerwiegend |