

## Discharge Instructions

### **COLD SORE**

A cold sores (also called "Fever Blister") is a common viral infection around the lips. It is caused by the Herpes Simplex virus. There are two types of Herpes Simplex viruses (type 1 and type 2). Type 1 causes most cold sores, while type 2 causes most herpes genital infections.

Most of the time, a cold sore is spread to another by coughing, sneezing, kissing or touching the cold sore. However, during oral-genital contact with a cold sore, the type 1 virus can cause a genital sore in the exposed person. Just as a type 2 virus from a genital sore can cause a lip sore in the exposed person.

A cold sore starts as a small group of painful blisters on the lip or inside the mouth. The lip blisters break open, dry up and usually go away within ten days. Factors that affect recurrence include:

- Emotional stress
- Presence of another illness (cold, flu, or fever from any cause)
- Heavy sun exposure
- Menstruation

Cold sores are contagious a few days before the onset of an attack until the blisters have dried up. Treatment with antiviral creams or ointments can shorten the time it takes to heal by about 1 to 2 days.

#### **HOME CARE:**

- 1) You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) to control pain or fever, unless another medicine was prescribed. **[NOTE: If you have chronic liver or kidney disease or ever had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding, talk with your doctor before using these medicines.]** (Aspirin should never be used in anyone under 18 years of age who is ill with a fever. It may cause severe liver damage.)
- 2) Over-the-counter remedies such as Campho-Phenique or Anbesol may help relieve pain. For severe pain, apply an ice cube to the lip sore for a few minutes at a time, off and on. Rinse with a glass of warm water and a teaspoon of baking soda to relieve mouth pain. Avoid acidic foods (citrus fruits and tomatoes).
- 3) Take any anti-viral medicines (pills or creams) exactly as directed.
- 4) Do not touch the cold sore. Avoid touching your eyes so the virus does not spread there.
- 5) To avoid spreading the virus to others during an outbreak, wash your hands often. Do not kiss or share utensils, towels, razor or toothbrush. Avoid oral-genital contact.
- 6) Wear a hat and use zinc oxide or sun block on your lips before spending time in the sun.
- 7) Children with open draining lip sores should be kept out of school or day care until the sore forms a scab.

**FOLLOW UP** with your doctor as advised by our staff.

## Discharge Instructions (con't)

**RETURN PROMPTLY** or contact your doctor if any of the following occur:

- Eye pain, redness or drainage from the eye
- Headache, stiff neck
- Fever over 100.4° F (38.0° C) oral, or over 101.4° F (38.6 C) rectal, that lasts more than 3 days
- Inability to eat or drink due to pain
- Unusual irritability, drowsiness or confusion
- For infants & small children: No wet diapers for 8 hours, no tears when crying, sunken eyes or dry mouth