HSV-1 increasingly becoming a cause for genital herpes

The disease is incurable but can be managed by practicing safe sex and with medications

New Delhi, 24 August 2017: As per recent statistics, about two-thirds of the world’s population under 50 has the highly infectious herpes virus. More than 3.7 billion people under the age of 50 suffer from the herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1), which they usually contract in childhood. As per the IMA, this virus causes cold sores around the mouth. HSV-1 is increasingly becoming a cause of genital infection too, mainly in rich countries.

A genital herpes outbreak or episode can occur when the HSV-1 or HSV-2 virus is reactivated from its dormant stage. This is an incurable disease, and once contracted, a person may experience outbreaks throughout their lifetime. The first outbreak of herpes is often the longest.

Speaking about this, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, “Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) which causes herpetic sores. These are painful blisters (fluid-filled bumps) that can break open and ooze fluid. These viruses get into the body through the mucous membranes which are thin layers of tissue lining the openings of the body. These are found in a person’s nose, mouth, and genitals. Once inside the body, these viruses incorporate themselves into your cells. As viruses multiply or adapt to environments very easily, treating viral infections becomes difficult. It is important to inform the doctor if you have genital herpes during pregnancy. This will enable them in taking precautions to prevent the virus from being transmitted to the baby during delivery.”

Some general symptoms in both men and women include blisters on the mouth, lips, and elsewhere; itching or tingling in the infected area; ulcer and oozing in the blisters; crust over the sores; swelling in the lymph glands; and headaches, body aches, and fever.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “It is important to practice safe sex and use condoms during intercourse to prevent genital herpes and other STDs from spreading. Although there is no cure for this condition, medication can help in managing it. The disease tends to stay dormant within the body until something triggers an outbreak such as stress, illness, or tiredness. Discussing it with the doctor can help in arriving at a correct treatment plan.”
Here are some tips to prevent genital herpes.

Use a condom every time you have sex. A latex condom can give protection from the herpes virus if it covers the infected area.

Enquire about your partner’s sexual history A person with many partners is more likely to be infected with the virus.

Indulge in safe sex Don't have sex with a partner who has sores on his or her genitals.

Get your partner tested If you think your partner is at high risk for genital herpes, you may consider asking him or her to be tested. In that case, you should be tested, too.

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**About IMA:** Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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