

**Your child may have been exposed to:****Herpes  
(Cold Sores)**

Herpes simplex is a viral infection that may cause sores in the mouth or on the lips and face. The sores are commonly called cold sores.

If you think your child has **cold sores**, tell your childcare provider or call the school.

**Keep your child home from childcare** if they have a **first infection** and are drooling. Your child can return when the sores in the mouth have healed.

Your child does not need to stay home if they have a recurring infection.

School aged children do not need to stay home.

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.

**Symptoms**

The first time a child is infected there may be blister-like sores inside the mouth and on the gums. Your child may have a fever and be fussy. The cold sores and fever blisters may occur many times in a person's life (recurrent infection).

If your child is infected for the first time, it may take 2 to 14 days for symptoms to start.

**Spread**

- By having direct contact with saliva, commonly by kissing.
- By touching the fluid from the blisters or sores.

**Contagious period**

First infection: up to 2 weeks, sometimes longer.  
Recurring infection: usually 3 to 5 days.

**Call your health care provider**

- If anyone in your home has symptoms of oral herpes infection.

**Prevention**

- Remind children not to touch the sores.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the mouth or the sores. Your child may need help with hand washing.
- Clean and disinfect objects that come in contact with the sores or secretions from the mouth. Use a product that kills germs.
- Do not kiss a person with sores on or near the mouth.
- Wear disposable medical gloves when touching the sores and use a cotton-tipped swab to apply medication. Dispose of gloves after use.