Herpes... 
...is transmitted by genital, anal, oral, or hand contact with sores or just before the sore is present.
...is caused by herpes simplex virus (HSV). HSV can cause oral or genital herpes.
...is not curable.
...can be treated with medicine. Symptoms often return from time to time.
...is often not visible, but is still transmittable.

What is it?
- Herpes is caused by herpes simplex virus (HSV).
- Herpes infection causes small, painful blisters on the genitals, mouth, or anus.
- Oral herpes, called cold sores and fever blisters, can be transmitted to the genitals and genital herpes can be transmitted to the mouth.

How is it transmitted?
- Herpes is transmitted by having vaginal, oral, or anal sex with an infected person.
- HSV is spread by genital, anal, oral, or hand contact with the area where the sore is going to appear and with the sore itself until it is completely healed.
- An infected mother can give HSV to her baby during birth.

What are symptoms of infection?
- Herpes may cause flu-like feelings, such as fever, swollen glands, feeling tired, and aching muscles, especially when a person is first infected.
- Herpes causes small, painful blisters on the genitals or mouth.
- Herpes blisters weep (secrete fluid), and then form scabs and heal.
- There are often no symptoms.
- The area where the sore will develop might itch and burn just before the blisters appear.
- Herpes blisters last one to three weeks, and then disappear.
- A person still has HSV after the blisters disappear. The blisters may return repeatedly.

What are other consequences of infection?
- Herpes blisters are painful and unsightly.
- An infected mother can give HSV to her baby during birth. Infected babies may suffer severe central nervous system damage and/or painful blisters anywhere on the body. If treated, the symptoms may be less severe.
- One type of herpes can be transmitted to the eyes by hand contact. Pain and redness of the eye and pain and cloudiness of the cornea can result.

How is it diagnosed?
- Local health departments, school-based health clinics, and other doctor’s offices may offer confidential, free or low-cost testing and treatment for herpes for young people.
- The only way for a person to be sure if he or she has herpes is to visit a doctor or nurse and ask to be tested for herpes. They will do a pelvic exam for women and a visual examination of the genitalia for men. Cells taken from a blister with a cotton swab will be tested. If sores are not present, a blood test may be used.

Is there a treatment? A cure?
- Herpes cannot be cured.
- Herpes sores can be treated by a physician. Treatment usually works best if begun early.
- Treatments may reduce the symptoms and prevent more outbreaks.

How can it be avoided?
- Abstain from vaginal, oral, and anal sex.
- Avoid genital, anal, oral, or hand contact with the area where the sore is going to appear and with the sore itself until it is completely healed.
- Reduce the risk of getting herpes by avoiding contact if blisters are present. However, blisters are not always visible.