



# Health Awareness

## Health Experts Concerned That Patients With Common Medical Condition Are Not Using Suppressive Therapy

(NAPSA)—Results of a new survey reveal that most genital herpes patients do not take suppressive therapy for genital herpes—one of the most reported sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in the United States—as frequently as those with other common, chronic conditions such as asthma and psoriasis. The survey was commissioned by the National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC), a leading national women's health advocacy organization, to help educate consumers about genital herpes during STD Awareness Month. The survey defined suppressive therapy as a medication taken regularly, that is on a daily or weekly basis even when symptoms are not present to reduce the number of outbreaks/attacks that occur in a year.

The survey, which looks at patients managing long-term chronic conditions, suggests more than twice as many patients with asthma who are aware of suppressive therapy use it on a regular basis to manage their condition compared to genital herpes patients who are aware of suppressive therapy (46 percent versus 16 percent). This despite research that shows suppressive therapy can help reduce the frequency of recurrent genital herpes outbreaks for many patients. Additionally, of all the respondents, genital herpes patients had the highest incidence of not doing anything to manage their condition (28 percent), followed by asthma (6 percent) and psoriasis (5 percent).

"This survey suggests that patients are not recognizing that suppressive therapy can reduce the number of genital herpes outbreaks," said Sue Johanson, R.N., sex educator and host of the Oxygen Network's increasingly popular "Talk Sex with Sue Johanson."



**A survey showed patients aren't taking advantage of suppressive therapy benefits.**

"There's a need for more patient education regarding the benefits of suppressive therapy, and I encourage genital herpes patients to ask their doctors about these benefits."

The survey revealed that 77 percent of genital herpes patients are aware that suppressive therapy could reduce the number of their outbreaks. Despite a high awareness rate among genital herpes patients of suppressive therapy benefits, 43 percent of those not wanting to take advantage of suppressive therapy say it is because they do not like taking medication when no symptoms are present.

"Because oral antiviral medications such as Famvir® (famciclovir) have been proven effective in increasing the time between recurrent genital herpes outbreaks, it's important for patients to know that suppressive therapy is an option," said Dr. Hilary Baldwin, Associate Professor of Clinical Dermatology and Director of Dermatologic Survey, State University of New York, Health Science Center at Brooklyn. "Patients should be proactive about speaking with their physicians about suppressive

therapy and physicians should inform their patients as well."

Genital herpes is a lifelong viral infection and is one of the most common STDs in the U.S. It is caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV), of which there are two types. HSV-1 is the virus that primarily causes cold sores. HSV-2 is transmitted sexually and is usually the primary cause of genital herpes. Although genital herpes is highly infectious and affects nearly one in five Americans (approximately 50 million Americans), up to 90 percent of those people affected do not know they are infected. While there is no cure for genital herpes, there are effective oral antiviral medications that can help many patients manage the condition.

For more information about genital herpes and antiviral treatment with Famvir, visit [www.genitalherpes.com](http://www.genitalherpes.com).

Famvir (famciclovir) is a prescription medication indicated for the treatment or suppression of recurrent genital herpes in immunocompetent patients; the treatment of recurrent mucocutaneous herpes simplex infections in HIV-infected patients; and the treatment of acute herpes zoster (shingles). The efficacy of Famvir has not been established for initial episode genital herpes infection. The safety and efficacy of Famvir for suppressive therapy have not been established beyond one year. Even with antiviral treatment it is possible to spread the herpes virus to others. There is no cure for genital herpes. In clinical trials, the most commonly reported adverse events vs. placebo were headache, nausea, and diarrhea. For full prescribing information on Famvir, please visit: <http://www.pharma.us.novartis.com/product/pi/pdf/Famvir.pdf>.