

HEALTH ALERT!

New Survey Shows Most Americans Are Not Concerned With Contracting Herpes, Despite Alarming Increase In Infections

(NAPSA)—Statistics show that a chronic and incurable virus affects one out of every five teens and adults in the United States and has increased a staggering 30 percent over the last two decades. It's estimated 50 million Americans have genital herpes, and there are one million newly diagnosed infections each year. Yet in a nationwide survey conducted in conjunction with the University of Connecticut, nearly 80 percent of Americans are unaware of how widespread genital herpes has become and 65 percent say that they are "not at all" concerned about contracting the disease. Many also did not know what could be done about it if they contracted it.

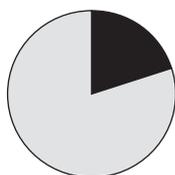
"I see many genital herpes patients who have suffered painful and frequent outbreaks for years because they were unaware of available antiviral treatments that significantly reduce the number of outbreaks," said Hilary Baldwin, vice-chair and associate professor of clinical dermatology at the State University of New York (SUNY) Health and Science Center in Brooklyn.

The Good News

"A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that by using the prescription medication Famvir® (famciclovir) as prescribed, the frequency of outbreaks from genital herpes can be reduced from an average of five to one over a one-year period. If more people knew this, I think they would more readily seek diagnosis and treatment," added Baldwin.

Note to Editors: The most commonly reported adverse events in people taking Famvir are headache, nausea and diarrhea. No antiviral has been proven to prevent the transmission of genital herpes. There is no cure for genital herpes. The efficacy of Famvir has not been established for initial episode genital herpes infection. Please see accompanying full prescribing information.

Genital herpes is a painful and incurable viral condition caused by the herpes simplex virus. It affects almost 50 million people in the United States, or 1 out of every 5 American teens and adults. A recent national survey explored knowledge of genital herpes among the general public.



Of the 50 million Americans affected with genital herpes, 80% were unaware that they had it.



65% reported they were "not at all concerned" about contracting genital herpes.

®

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the number of Americans with genital herpes has increased by 30 percent in the last two decades.

In clinical trials, 29 percent of Famvir patients were recurrence free after one year, versus six percent on placebo.

The Survey Results

The survey showed that nearly eight out of ten people were unable to select the correct prevalence of genital herpes in the United States and 8 out of 10 people considered themselves either "not at all concerned" or "not too concerned" about contracting the disease. Furthermore, the survey revealed that women were less concerned with contracting the disease than men (70 percent versus 58 percent). Additionally, when asked about treatments, only 26 percent of the people surveyed knew that treatment is available that can reduce outbreaks by 80 percent.

According to the survey, 75 percent of respondents were aware that genital herpes could be transmitted to a partner even if the infected individual is not having a visible outbreak or

symptoms. Although symptoms may not be present, the virus can be transmitted during this time. Respondents also knew (76 percent) that the use of a latex condom does not fully protect against transmission.

American Social Health Association (ASHA) president Linda Alexander, Ph.D., FAAN, explained that "the fact that so many people have genital herpes, yet virtually everybody underestimates the pervasiveness of the disease and their own personal risk is what I call the herpes disconnect. This disparity needs to be addressed because 90 percent of those who have genital herpes don't recognize the symptoms and may remain undiagnosed. People should feel comfortable discussing sexually transmitted diseases like genital herpes with their health-care provider to ensure that they get the correct diagnosis and treatment."

More information is available at www.genitalherpes.com.