

Health Awareness



The Cold Truth About Cold Sores

(NAPSA)—Although people have long given lip service to some myths about cold sores, learning the truth may be a relief to many. Here's a cold hard look at the fiction and the facts about cold sores:

Myth: If you have never had a cold sore, you don't carry the virus that causes them.

Fact: The fact is that 80 to 90 percent of adults have been exposed to the cold sore virus but, for unknown reasons, only 20 to 40 percent of people who get the virus actually experience outbreaks. Still, that means some 80 million Americans will experience at least one outbreak a year.

Myth: Pricking the blisters with sterilized needles and applying rubbing alcohol, witch hazel, tea bags or ice can speed up healing.

Fact: Home remedies have not been clinically proven to heal cold sores or lessen healing time. Though they may ease the discomfort, they could in some cases make it worse or cause the outbreak to last longer than it should according to experts.

Myth: There's nothing you can do about cold sores.

Fact: Cold sores can occur due to cold weather, sun exposure, stress, sickness, injury to the mouth or lack of sleep; understanding and avoiding these triggers can help you prevent or shorten an outbreak. Although there's no cure for cold sores, it is possible to reduce the frequency of outbreaks or speed up healing time and the duration of symptoms when you get them.

Here are a few hints on how:



Understanding just what can cause and how to treat a cold sore may help millions of Americans feel better faster.

1. It's important not to share personal items or kiss for the entire cold sore life cycle.

2. Get plenty of rest. A worn down body is more likely to get sick and find it hard to keep the virus inactive.

3. Ask your medical provider about over-the-counter treatments, including the No. 1 pharmacist-recommended cold sore brand, Abreva. Only Abreva is FDA approved, and it has medicine in it that helps block the virus from entering healthy cells to speed healing.

4. Use sunscreen to avoid over-exposure to the sun.

5. Learn more about cold sore treatment and prevention at www.coldsore.com or www.MedicineNotMyth.com. There, you can also play a new interactive and informative trivia game about cold sores and their treatment. Those who clear the board can also enter for a chance to win \$500. A new winner is announced monthly through March.